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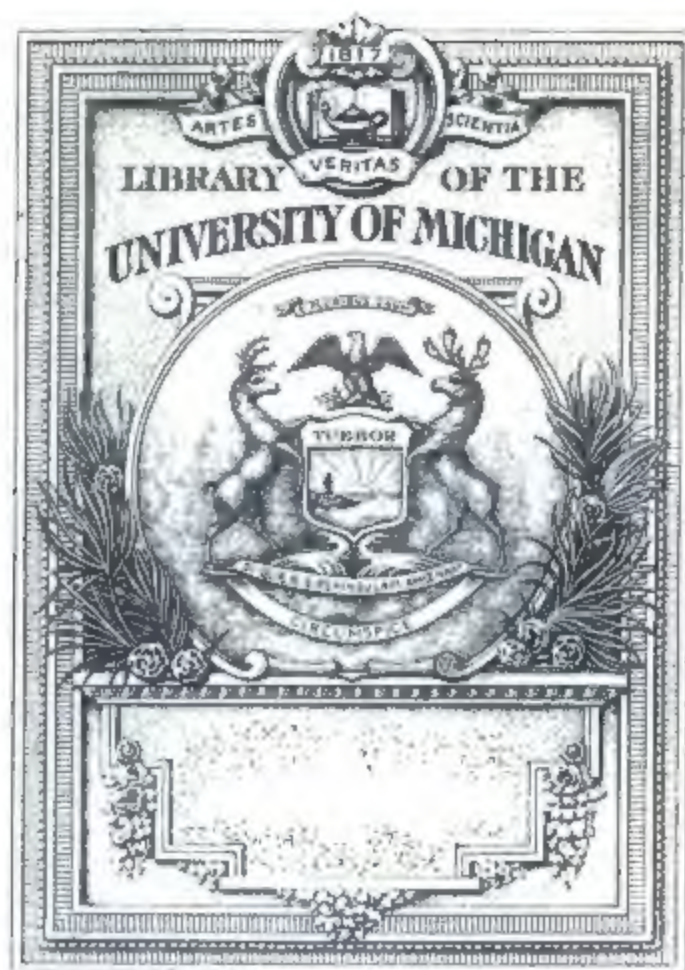
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A PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO THE

PROPHECIES,

WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR INTERPRETATION AND
FULFILMENT, AND TO PERSONAL EDIFICATION.

BY THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed."—2 PETER i. 19.

FROM THE SIXTH LONDON EDITION, ENLARGED.

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

NEXT to the moral and experimental evidence of God's word, the evidence of prophecy is, of all others, the most convincing, satisfactory, and even overwhelming, to a wise, learned, and candid mind. There is such an accumulation of proof upon proof in a vast multitude of improbabilities, there is such a chain of evidence for thousands of years, there is such an impossibility in the very nature of things of any forgery; there is such a growing strength in the evidence, from age to age, to our own times, there is such rich spiritual use in the prophecies themselves, that the moral conviction is conclusive; we cannot but say, when the subject has been calmly and completely investigated, the finger of God is visible in this—it is his own word.

[2] And this evidence, arising from the past and the present fulfilment of prophecy, is connected with the most elevating and comforting hopes as to all that is to come; the great things that most concern us as individual believers, and that most concern the church of Christ, are set before us with the distinctness of history, leading us to the full hope of the richest and most enduring blessedness. The past completion, also, of prophecy furnishes us with the best rules for understanding what is yet unfulfilled. If it be said, there are serious differences among Christian interpreters; these, though stumbling to a beginner, are not such as at all materially to weaken our conclusions. The differences are rather, as to the modes or time in which the result shall be accomplished, and the exact

nature of that result, than concerning the result itself. Nor are they so great as in many of those sciences which men still pursue with the greatest ardour and with many beneficial consequences. If there were but the same earnestness in pursuing this heavenly science, as stimulates in pursuing earthly sciences, the difficulties and differences, instead of stumbling men and turning them aside, would only increase the zeal of investigation, and the ardent thirst for divine knowledge.

Whosoever considers duly how much of the whole Bible is of a prophetic character, and that our God did undoubtedly design that this part of his word should be studied, and be profitable to his church, cannot but be sensible that the right understanding of the prophecies is a valuable gift to the Christian, and greatly to be esteemed. To understand not only the past, but the present, and the general character of the future according to the Divine Mind, raises [3] us above the petty scenes of this transient world and its little conflicts, into communion with the Divine Being; and our minds open to those larger views by which God would lead his people to the discovery of his wisdom, power, and love; and, while on earth, to have their conversation in heaven.

It is not to be supposed that prophecy is only useful as an evidence of inspiration; it is equally useful as a warning of evil to come, and a support under present trials. Thus Noah was preserved from the deluge, and Lot from the destruction of Sodom, and the first Christians from that of Jerusalem; and, had the Antediluvians, and the inhabitants of Sodom, and the Jews, attended to prophecy, they would have escaped destruction. Caleb and Joshua believed in the promised possession of Canaan, and entered in; while the children of Israel in general perished in the wilderness; Rahab regarded the prophecy (Josh. ii. 9; Heb. ii. 31.) and was saved, while the men of Jericho perished.

The preaching of prophetic truth is also an important duty, as we see in the cases of Noah, Daniel, and Jonah. The preaching of it to Nineveh was attended with a national blessing, and a considerable delay of judgment.

Nor must the revelation of prophecy be confounded with the *secret things* which *belong to God*, but rather placed among those *things which are revealed* and belong to *us and our children*. Deut. xxix. 29.

It is most desirable not only that ministers but that Christians in general should give serious attention to this subject. *I would not have you to be ignorant concerning* a most important future prophecy relating to the second advent of Christ, is the apostle's statement [4] to the Thessalonian Christians. 1 Thess.

iv. 13. O how infinitely more worthy is this of our attention, than most of those works often of polluting fancy, or mere controversy, in which so much of modern literature consists; where the principles of this world, and the littleness of man's doings and glory, fill the page, and spread a debasing and earthly influence over our understanding and our affections: or the imagination and the feelings are excited without being brought out into really good actions, and so the best powers of men are deadened and stupified, when real cases of distress, and the self-denying work of the Christian life come before them. There is a *willing ignorance* (2 Peter iii. 5.) respecting the day of Christ which is much condemned by the Spirit of God.

Nor is there any obscurity in the subject that should hinder laymen, ignorant of the learned languages, from acquiring most profitable knowledge.

Bishop Horsley, well competent to speak on such a point, gives these two rules of exposition founded on 2 Peter i. 20, 21.

“(1.) Every single text of prophecy is to be considered as a part of an entire system, and to be understood in that sense which may best connect it with the whole. (2.) The sense of prophecy in general is to be sought in the events which have actually taken place.”

Bishop Horsley then goes on to say, “To qualify the Christian to make a judicious application of these rules, no skill is requisite in verbal criticism—no proficiency in the subtleties of the logician's art—no acquisition of recondite learning. That degree of understanding with which serious minds are ordinarily [5] blessed—those general views of the schemes of Providence, and that general acquaintance with the prophetic language, which no Christian can be wanting in, who is constant, as every true Christian is, in his attendance on public worship, and gives that serious attention which every true Christian gives to the word of God, as it is read to him in our churches, and expounded from our pulpits;—these qualifications, accompanied with a certain strength of memory and quickness of recollection, which exercise and habit bring—and with a certain patience of attention in comparing parallel texts—these qualifications will enable the pious though unlearned Christian, to succeed in the application of the apostle's rules, so far at least as to derive much rational amusement—much real edification—much consolation—much confirmation of his faith—much animation of his hopes—much joy and peace in believing, from that heedful meditation of the prophetic word which

all men would do well to remember, an inspired apostle has enjoined.”

It is a beautiful remark of Roos’s—“By the study of the prophetic word, the heart is weaned from the world, placed upon celestial objects, and prepared for entering on the enjoyment of pure, uninterrupted, and eternal bliss.”

If *the word of Christ* be to *dwell in us richly in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*;—(Col. iii. 16.) if we are *not to despise prophesyings*; (1 Thess. v. 20.) if we are to *take heed to them as a more sure word*; (2 Pet. i. 19.) if they tend to illustrate Providence in dangerous times, to confirm our faith, to stir up prayer, to excite hope, to make us patient in affliction, to bring consolation, and to beget in us the fear [6] of God,* then is diligent meditation in the prophetic scriptures a plain duty.

Taking heed to *the sure word of prophecy* being a duty required in the word of God, no man is justified in neglecting it. However there may be, and are, prior duties that require our first care and attention, this too must have its due share of regard. There may, indeed, be an exclusive and excessive attention to it, which is wrong. The study, when once the mind and heart are truly interested in it, is so attractive and engrossing, that persons in such circumstances, need a caution not to have their thoughts too much occupied with one part of divine truth, and to be told how very possible it is to have the mind wholly filled with the subject of prophecy, and the heart unconverted to God, and the whole man dead in trespasses and sins. Nothing can be more awful than for a man to have a clear view of judgments impending and glories ready to be revealed, and yet take no practical steps for his own personal escape from the wrath to come, and his own personal attainment of the promised blessedness.

Yet we must not, because of such a case, *despise prophesyings*. Nor must we do this, because we have seen another evil very distinctly in our days: many attending with eagerness to prophetic study, and running at the same time to excesses and wildness in things by no means necessarily connected with this study. Satan has never failed to join serious error [7] with revived truth. By this means he sought to discredit the early Protestants, and if men had yielded to this artifice, we should never have had the glorious Reformation. We must *separate*

* Scripturarum prophetiarum diligens meditatio necessaria est, quia (1.) Sunt pars verbi Dei; Col. iii. 16. (2.) Sedulo nobis commendatur a Paulo. 1 Thess. v. 20, et a Petro, 2 Pet. i. 19. (3.) Conciliant Providentiam in temporibus periculosis, confirmant fidem, provocant preces, excitant spem, suadent patientiam, afferunt consolationem, gignunt numinis timorem. Gurtleri Systema Theologiæ, 761.

the precious from the vile, Jer. xv. 19; we must *try all things, and hold fast that which is good*. 1 Thess. v. 21.

Though the subject of Prophecy has recently, from the remarkable state of the world, and the rise and progress of Religious Societies, justly attracted much attention, yet, some think it attended with so many DIFFICULTIES, that it had better not be considered at all. But the sacred writers so urge us to this consideration, that St. John declares of the most difficult book of prophecy, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand*, Rev. i. 3. It is, however, very needful to study this subject with a holy awe on the mind, remembering, that we are considering that which was given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

More or less obscurity attends all predictions previous to their fulfilment; and, even when they are fulfilled, and illustrated by the facts of history, it is allowed that the obscurity of the language in some degree remains. This has been sufficiently accounted for. Bishop Sherlock remarks, "No event can make a figurative or metaphorical expression to be a plain and literal one: to inquire why the ancient prophecies are not clearer, is like inquiring why God has not given us more reason, or made us as wise as angels. He has given us, in both cases, so much light as he thought proper, and enough to serve the ends which he intended."

Besides, we are living in the dispensation, which, [8] considered as comprising the glory of the latter day, is the great theme of prophecy. As the predictions, then, are admitted to be more or less obscure, till after they are completed, and perhaps, in some cases, till some considerable time after their completion; the true explication of those which may have their incipient or commencing accomplishment in our own time, must be left to posterity. If the whole course of events belonging to any particular prophecy be not before us, we are not adequate judges of the subject.

There is a moral advantage in this obscurity, similar to that which there is in many of God's dealings with us, in a world where, in an important sense, we are in a state of probation. Light enough is afforded to guide and cheer, quicken and excite the humble and sincere; and darkness enough is left to check the pride of human speculation, and to try the spirit; so that the character of those who do not choose, from the love of sin, to see the truth, will be manifested. They will make this obscurity a plausible excuse for rejecting a system of divine truth which the upright mind gladly and gratefully welcomes. The minds of men are thus exercised, strengthened,

and enlarged, by the necessity of studying this solemn subject in that frame of mind which can alone make it a source of genuine edification.

The scriptures frequently allude to the state of mind and heart, as greatly affecting our understanding of divine truth. Dan. xii. 10. Matt. xi. 25. To furnish a test of the moral state, seems to be one reason of the obscurity of scripture. Psalm xxv. 9. Isaiah xxviii. 9. Prov. xi. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 18.

Prophecy is not designed, then, to gratify mere [9] curiosity respecting futurity; but while it tries and exercises Christian graces in the view taken of it; it encourages the hopes, and refreshes the hearts of Christians; prepares them for times of suffering; and increases their patience and their zeal by the general assurances of the ultimate triumph of the Church of Christ over all its enemies. It is therefore written just in sufficient obscurity to answer these ends, without our becoming prophets, or perfectly comprehending the predictions previously to the occurrence of the predicted events; and yet it becomes adequately plain, immediately or more remotely after the events may have taken place, to every candid mind, that the God, revealed in the scriptures, had foreseen and foretold them. *These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.* John xvi. 4.

Future things are not, however, to be pryed into, beyond what God has revealed; so far as he has revealed them, it is our duty and privilege to search into them: *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which he has revealed, unto us and to our children.* Deut. xxix. 29. Many of those who have attempted particularly to describe future, or even passing events, have, in some particular or other, been found to fail; and have, if they have lived, had to retract their assertions, and re-state their views. These things have helped, though most unjustly, to bring the sacred subject of prophecy into contempt: there is no knowledge, human or divine, which may not be rejected, if such a ground of rejection were admitted;—the children of this world are much wiser in their studies. Still we should remember, that though the Apostles and sacred writers in the New [10] Testament, speak of passing events as then accomplishing prophecy, an inspired writer might with authority and propriety say, *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet*, when the matter would require a far greater degree of circumspection in any but an inspired teacher. Let us be content to rest in such general statements as the word of God authorizes, till events have been so completed as to shew what God intended; and let us contemplate the future prospects of the church with that waiting spirit which leaves to God the unfolding of his own will and purpose.

The late Mr. Davison speaks thus of the structure and use of Ancient Prophecy:—

“I. The character of Prophecy is not simple and uniform, nor its light equable. It was dispensed in various degrees of revelation, and that revelation adapted by the wisdom of God to purposes which we must explore by studying its records and considering its capacity of application.

“II. The *principal age* of prophecy is from *Samuel to Malachi*. From *the fall* to the *flood*, and from thence to the call of Abraham, its communications are few. In the Patriarchal age they are *enlarged*. During the Bondage in Egypt they are discontinued, but renewed with the Law. A pause of them during 400 years follows the Law, and a pause of the like duration precedes the Gospel.

“III. The *subjects* of prophecy are varied. Whilst it was all directed to one general design, in the evidence and support of religion, there was a diversity in the administration of the Spirit in respect of that design. In Paradise, it gave the first hope of a Redeemer. After the deluge, it established the [11] peace of the natural world. In Abraham it founded the double Covenant of Canaan and the Gospel. In the age of the Law it spake of the second Prophet, and foreshadowed in types the *Christian Doctrine*, but foretold most largely the future state of the selected people who were placed under that preparatory Dispensation. In the time of David it revealed the Gospel Kingdom with the promise of the Temporal. In the days of the later prophets, it pre-signified the changes of the Mosaic Covenant, embraced the history of the chief Pagan Kingdoms, and completed the annunciation of the Messiah and his work of Redemption. After the Captivity it gave a last and more urgent information of the approaching Advent of the Gospel.

“The Holy Jesus and his Religion are the one principal object of Prophecy, the beginning and the end of the elder revelation of God. St. Paul has intimated the varied form and different degrees of light under which prophecy was successively dispensed, when he says of it, that God, in sundry partitions of his truth, (*πολυμυρως*) *and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets.*”

To this must be added the blessed fact, which we see everywhere, that the grand result of Prophecy is the ultimate and everlasting triumph of Christ, and his kingdom over all the earth—the head of the serpent bruised, and all nations blessed in the seed of the woman; the love of God, while it developes the stubbornness of evil, finally triumphs over it, *to the praise of the glory of his grace.*

CHAPTER II.

PRACTICAL RULES AND CAUTIONS.

[12] The following Rules for the investigation of Prophecy, may, it is hoped, assist the student, and guard him against being carried away by mere speculation: for several parts of the directions here given, the author has been indebted to the last chapter of Vitringa's work. (Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae.)

“The interpretation of Prophecy (2 Pet. i. 19, 20,) consists in ascertaining the events to which predictions allude, and in shewing the agreement between the images of the prediction, and the particulars of the history. The original word *ἐπιλυσις* expresses this particular sort of interpretation, that exposition which renders the mystic sense of parables, dreams, and prophecies.”*

1. TO GAIN THE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, is the first of all requisites with reference to a due understanding of prophecy, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled. This is clear from our Lord's statement, (John xvi. 13,) “when He the Spirit of truth is come, he [13] will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and *he will shew you things to come*. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you.” No doubt, this promise was in its highest sense realized in the inspired writers of the New Testament, and in the predictions recorded in their writings; but the same spirit is required to give us understanding of the words of the Spirit. Even the inspired writers needed prayer for this teaching, as we see by the constant prayers of David for divine teaching, and the inquiring and searching diligently of the prophets, and the practical and personal revelation to them of the design of their prophecies. (1 Peter i. 10—12.)

We must not expect, we need not, that extraordinary illumination of the Spirit which inspired the sacred writers. The ordinary guidance of the Spirit, is however promised to all. (Luke xi. 13.) He removes prejudices which hinder the faculties of knowledge and judgment from attaining even the historical and literal sense of prophecy, and leads men to submit to God's truth willingly. The teaching of the same Spirit is specially needed in things of a spiritual character, relating

* See Bishop Horsley.

to Christ and his kingdom, and its blessings and privileges. None can perceive the true and interior sense of these things, but he who is in the faith—a spiritual man—endued both with the understanding and experience of the benefits. If we humbly and earnestly ask the aid of the Holy Spirit, with confession of our ignorance and weakness, and even stupidity, he will succour us with his grace, and remove the veil from our eyes and from the things themselves. The record, Zech. [14] iv. 5, 13, 14; Dan. vii. 16; Rev. xvii. 7; and the inquiries there made as to the prophecies being understood, with the answers given, may shew us how willing God is that we should understand his revealed purposes.

3. A BELIEVING, PRAYERFUL, HUMBLE, SUBMISSIVE, AND OBEDIENT STATE OF HEART is very needful to give effect to every other rule. We must bring to this study a pure and sober mind, free from erroneous anticipations; not thinking slightly of, but reverencing God and his Word, and prepared to admit every part of his revealed will, with the obedience of faith. Eyes single, harmless and simple towards God and his word, are required; not distorted and turned back by men's opinions. This, too, is a benefit coming from the divine bounty. The aid of the Holy Spirit is to be implored, to work in us these good and holy affections of mind, and to preserve them when wrought; so that he may enlighten the mind, remove the veil, direct us aright, and keep us from things to be avoided. The saints have in all ages acknowledged this to be the work of the Holy Ghost. (Psalm xliii. 3; cxix. 18, 27, 66.) Certainly, *in the light of God we see light*. Psalm xxxvi. 9. He who wants this is in darkness, though he may appear to himself to be especially wise.

3. COMMENCE THIS STUDY WITH THE WORD OF GOD. This is the fountain head; the whole source of all prophetic knowledge; nothing is of any value, but as it is founded on, and illustrative of, the divine testimony. It is, therefore, of especial importance to read first, and carefully, God's own word; beginning with the earlier predictions, and going on to the close; such easy books as Brown's Harmony of [15] Scripture Prophecies, or Simpson's Key, or Newton on the Prophecies, will shew you that rich stream of Prophecy which runs through all the word of God. In forming your sentiments on expressions, take an enlarged view of the whole of a prophecy, before you determine the meaning of a particular sentence in it: for some have taken a single sentence, and applied it to quite a different purpose than to its original use: mark what the prophet himself or other scriptures testify respecting the time and circumstances of the prophecy; in what year he

wrote, under what kings, for Judah or for Israel. This may sometimes be ascertained from the things stated; at least, as far as to point out before, or after, what time they were spoken.

4. Take **THE PLAIN LITERAL MEANING OF THE EXPRESSIONS**, where they are not evidently symbolical. Few things have occasioned more perverted views than figurative interpretation of plain expressions. It has thrown away much of the prophetic use and instruction of lengthened and important predictions. There is, indeed, in almost all the prophecies, and especially in the Revelation, a mixture of symbolical and literal expressions, but the figure or symbol may, generally, be easily distinguished from the plain letter, which must as little as possible be departed from. This rule may be, and has been abused; but it is still important to bear it in mind, lest, for instance, without scriptural authority we apply to the Gentiles what God intended for the Jews; and to the awful destruction of Jerusalem, the much-desired blessing of the second coming of Christ for the salvation of his people. In most cases, what is symbolical is manifestly so; and there is need only of the ordinary [16] judgment of a sober mind so to interpret it, though the meaning of the symbol may be more difficult. The literal meaning, as expressed in the text, must, where there is no adequate necessity for leaving it, always be primarily attended to and made out, and adhered to; and this is only to be departed from when necessity, the context, or subsequent inspiration directs us to a symbolical, or enlarged meaning. Thus the book of Revelation has, by applying the name Babylon to Rome, and by varied uses of expressions of the Old Testament, led us to expect in subsequent events of the Roman empire, a fulfilment in the symbolical Babylon, of those predictions that have not been yet fulfilled in the history of the literal Babylon.*

5. **DILIGENTLY COMPARE ONE PART OF SCRIPTURE WITH ANOTHER.** No rule is more important for the right investigation of prophecy than this. One scheme, one argument, runs through, not only the more prophetic parts, but the whole volume of scripture. They are parts of the entire work of a single mind—God himself. They all proceeded, as Horsley observes, from one author—the Holy Ghost: “that omniscient mind to which the universe is ever present, in one unvaried, undivided thought!—the entire comprehension of the visible and intelligible world, with its ineffable variety of mortal and immortal natures; that mind in which all science, truth, and knowledge is summed up, and comprehended in one vast idea?”

* This rule will be further noticed in a distinct chapter.

Moses and Elias, and we may add, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, David, and the whole choir of prophets, (as Vitranga puts it,) here confer together between themselves and [17] Christ. (Matt. xvii. 3.) Thus shall we be taught the entire harmony and agreement between them; and that each speaks nothing but what the whole speaks. God has also graciously given links or clauses in one prophet, parallel with those of another, the combination of which throws light on the connection of one prophecy with another, just as the comparison of one statement of doctrine with another, throws light upon the general truth revealed. For instance, the Revelation is full of references to former Prophets, and contains a concentrated index, and an analytical view of the chief substance of those prophecies which were unaccomplished when it was written.

Bishop Horsley, in his four Sermons on 2 Peter i. 20, 21. has many striking remarks illustrative of this rule, and shewing that no prophecy of scripture is made its own interpreter, or of self-interpretation. He remarks, "the maxim is to be applied both to every single text of prophecy, and to the whole. Of any single text of prophecy, it is true that it cannot be its own interpreter, for this reason: because the scripture prophecies are not detached predictions of separate independent events, but are united in a regular and entire system, all terminating in one great object—the promulgation of the gospel, and the complete establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. Of this system every particular prophecy makes a part, and bears a more immediate, or a more remote relation to that which is the object of the whole. It is, therefore, very unlikely that the true signification of any particular text of prophecy should be discovered from the bare attention to the terms of the single prediction taken by itself, without considering it as a part of that system to which it unquestionably [18] belongs, and without observing how it may stand connected with earlier and later prophecies, especially with those which might more immediately precede or more immediately follow it. Again, of the whole of the Scripture prophecies, it is true, that it cannot be its own interpreter. Its meaning never can be discovered without a general knowledge of the principal events to which it alludes. Every particular prophecy is to be referred to the system, and to be understood in that sense which may most aptly connect it with the whole, and the sense of prophecy in general is to be sought in the events which have actually taken place."

6. CAREFULLY MARK THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECIES. There is much that is symbolical and figurative, but you will find few symbols of the meaning of which the

word of God does not give an account. This is often immediately connected with it; like a key tied by a string, close to the lock, that you may have every help for the interpretation; at other times it is given in other parts of the scripture. The New Testament frequently also furnishes a divinely inspired interpretation to the Old Testament prophecies. (See Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, and Luke iv. 21.) This will give you not only a clear guide to such prophecies, but a help to the right interpretation of similar predictions. It is a just remark of Mr. Allix:—"The later prophets having always added some new light to those who prophesied before them, it is a good and sure method to expound the old ones by the new, who illustrate the thoughts of those who went before them, and who lay them open in a larger view and brightness. Thus, for example, we find the right sense of several [19] Psalms concerning the return of the Jews from the captivity at the second coming of the Messiah, by what is said in Isaiah, chapter xii. wherein he gives the sense of several Psalms."*

7. NOTE, AS ACCURATELY AS YOU CAN, THE LINE BETWEEN WHAT HAS BEEN FULFILLED AND WHAT HAS NOT. If we do not this, we may weaken the strong clear evidence of divine inspiration from fulfilled prophecy. Yet distant events are so intermingled in almost all the prophecies, as to require careful caution and discrimination in the application of this rule. The passage which our Lord read from Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16—21, is a striking lesson. He read just as far as it had been fulfilled, and then *closed the book*, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears;" what follows in Isaiah, *The day of vengeance of our God*, had not then arrived. It is a remark of Irenæus, very useful to keep in view, though too generally and strongly expressed, "All prophecies before they are fulfilled, are enigmas and ambiguous to men; but when the time arrives, and the event predicted is accomplished, then they have a clear and certain exposition." This principle may be extended to the whole scheme of prophecy, which will, indeed, not be fully developed, till God's purposes are accomplished in the events foretold.

The PARTICULAR explanation of UNFULFILLED prophecy, is either not to be attempted, or stated with the greatest humility. The GENERAL meaning may be clear, when we go quite beyond our province in attempting to point out the particular mode of its [20] fulfilment. Let us rather attain Habakkuk's spirit, *I will watch to see what he will say unto me.* (Hab. ii. 1.)

8. ATTEND TO THE PROPHETIC MEANING OF THE PSALMS

* See Allix on the Psalms, p. 25.

AND PARABLES. We have been so accustomed to use them merely for devotional, practical, and moral purposes as almost to lose sight of their character as prophecies, full of the experience of Christ, and the glories of his kingdom. Mr. Allix says, "I am persuaded that the book of Psalms has in it a greater number of prophecies than any book of the Old Testament. There are well nigh fifty Psalms quoted several times in the New Testament which shows how properly our Lord made use of that book to instruct his disciples that he was the Christ. (Luke xxiv. 44.) It is therefore with great reason that the book of Psalms is, and has been, constantly read in public by the church, there being no one in the Old Testament where the faithful may find so much comfort, and so high raptures of devotion, as those with which the Holy Spirit moved David and his fellow prophets concerning the redemption of mankind, and the different stages through which the church, the mystical body of Christ, was to pass before she came to everlasting glory."

"I am persuaded," continues Mr. Allix, "that it is not at all possible to understand them unless one has always an eye to the various conditions of the church. (1.) As it consisted of the Jewish nation till the coming of Christ. (2.) As composed chiefly of the Gentiles since Christ's coming. (3.) As being persecuted both under the Roman empire, and under the kingdom of Antichrist. (4.) As intended to be delivered from that oppression by our Saviour's [21] second coming. (5.) As it shall be formed anew by the conversion of the Jews to the gospel. (6.) As it shall be augmented by the general conversion of all the nations who have not yet owned Christ for the true Messiah. (7.) As being governed during a long time, viz. ten centuries, by Christ. (8.) As it shall be attacked by Satan when he shall be loosed in the latter days, after which the final judgment is to follow." It adds much indeed to the power and blessedness of the Psalms to view them as they may so largely and properly be viewed, as the words of Christ, *touched with a feeling of our infirmities*.

Many of the **PARABLES** of our Lord are most important prophecies. The remarks of Mr. Greswell respecting this point, in his valuable work on the Parables are instructive. He distinguishes them into two classes, (1.) moral parabolic examples, and (2.) allegorical prophetic histories. Of the latter he enumerates these:—

1. The sower, Mat. xii.
2. The tares, Mat. xiii.
3. The seed growing, Mark iv. 26.
4. The mustard seed, Mat. xiii.

5. The leaven, Mat. xiii.
6. The hidden treasure, Mat. xiii.
7. The pearl, Mat. xiii.
8. The draw-net, Mat. xiii.

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| 9. The good shepherd, John x. | 15. The labourers, Mat. xx. |
| 10. The servants waiting, Luke xii. 36. | 16. The pounds, Luke xix. |
| 11. The Steward, Luke xii. 42. | 17. The wicked husbandman, Mat. xxi. 33. |
| 12. The barren fig-tree, Luke xiii. | 18. The wedding garment, Mat. xxii. |
| 13. The great supper, Luke xiv. | 19. The virgins, Mat. xxv. |
| 14. The prodigal, Luke xv. | 20. The talents, Mat. xxv. |

These he considers historical and prophetic vehicles of facts, rather than doctrines, and that in all these there is either clear or presumptive indication of their being in general allegories, and each in particular prophecies, and that it is a farther confirmation of this truth, that to ten of the number recorded by Matthew and Mark, the phrase '*the kingdom of God*,' [22] or '*heaven is like*,' is prefixed, and that to the 13th and 16th, recorded by St. Luke, it is virtually prefixed. The subject matter of the parables consists of a series of prophecies; the *mysteries* or secrets of the kingdom of God; the concealment of which for a time was wise and necessary. (Mark iv. 11, 12.) The great danger in such views of the parables is lest our mind should be diverted from the all-important personal application in our search after a supposed prophetic meaning. Let the reader be on his guard against this.*

9. STUDY AND COMPARE THE BEST INTERPRETERS OF PROPHECY. Sir Isaac Newton said most justly, that among the interpreters of the last age, there was scarcely one of note who had not made some discovery worth knowing, and this observation is true to the present day. This may much encourage searching books of an established character on this subject, [23] and comparing different opinions and systems, you will see, indeed, more of the difficulties, but you will have more materials for forming your own judgment. Only it is needful to remember

* There are some remarks on our Lord's seven parables, Matt. xiii. (as descriptive of a connected series, indicating progressively the several stages of advancement of the mystical kingdom of Christ,) in the words of Alexander Knox just published. See vol. i. p. 407—426. These views may be considered in connexion with those sentiments of prophetic writers, like Cocceius, Gurtler, Vitranga, and Venema, who have regarded the history of the Christian under seven periods, and the epistles to the seven churches as descriptive of these periods. Mr. Knox considers (1.) The parable of *the sower* as described in the commencement. (2.) *The tares*, the mixed state of the church. (3.) *The mustard seed* grown into a tree, its expanded state. (4.) *The leaven*, the hidden state of piety in the darker ages. (5.) *The treasure hid in the field*, the varied awakenings with its accidental adjuncts. (6.) *The pearl*, vital Christianity in its purity. (7.) *The net, like the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet*, marking the final close. Without entirely concurring in the view, and especially in the particular illustrations of it as given by different writers, the author submits it to the consideration of the diligent student of scripture. Mr. Knox gives some interesting illustrations of these parables. He is an original writer; but with some fanciful things on Justification: the reader, who is disposed to be carried away by Mr. Knox's genius, learning, and piety, would do well to consult Bishop Barlow's Letters.

that there is a broad difference between a human interpretation, and an inspired prophecy. *What is the chaff to the wheat?* The prophecy will stand for ever, and become brighter and clearer as years roll on, the human interpretation may be weakened or confirmed, strengthened and increased, or overthrown, just as it accords with the infallible mind of God. This is eminently true in the interpretation of mystical numbers, and their commencement and termination.

However desirable it is first to study the simple word itself, yet to expect to understand the more difficult parts of prophecy by our own meditations on them, without the help of others, is a vain thing. The Ethiopian Eunuch needed a Philip to understand the prophecy respecting Christ's first coming; and we need the aid of the lengthened and patient studies of learned and pious men, as well as our own deep meditations, to understand the predictions of his second coming. Such men have not laboured, prayed, and written in vain.

But do not make a mistake on the other side. It must not be imagined, from the long list of books at the end of this Treatise, that such an extended study of human writings is requisite to a right understanding and use of the prophecies in general, much less of any part of them. It is convenient to have such a list, and it may assist in pointing out works to those pursuing any particular branch of this study; but it is by no means necessary, in order to read the prophecies with advantage, to have such an [24] apparatus. They who keep the mystery of faith, in a pure mind and conscience, and, with holy purposes, humbly set about the meditation and search of this word, may, though not learned in human knowledge, draw from it necessary instruction, moral discipline, comforting hope, and assured faith. They will every where meet the testimony of Jesus, nor can they overlook those prophecies which describe his person, character, history, kingdom, and its privileges. And if they attain not all the meaning of other prophecies, and cannot demonstrate their fulfilment from history, they may yet collect from them, general statements for their edification, nor will they doubt of their fulfilment; thus all kinds and degrees of men believing and loving the name and word of God, may receive solid advantage from reading the prophetic word.

10. **ATTAIN HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE.** This is not so difficult with regard to the interpretation of prophecy as might be imagined. The historical knowledge here wanted, is not the history of the human race (though that is glanced at and comprehended), but the history of nations connected with the

church of God. Dean Woodhouse observes:—"When the people of God were to become subservient to the four universal monarchies, the character and succession and fates of these monarchies were predicted; but the main object, continually kept in view, was their deliverance from these successive yokes by the superseding dominion of the Messiah. This supreme and universal dominion gradually and finally to prevail, appears to be the grand object of all sacred prophecy; and revolutions of worldly power among the gentiles, seem to be noticed only at those times when they impede or promote it." Historical knowledge, therefore, [25] is not of importance to that extent which some imagine, and which would render it impossible for an unlearned Christian to pretend to know the meaning of plain predictions in the Bible. Prophecy deals not in minute and recondite things, but in large, broad, comprehensive features. A comparatively slight knowledge of history, such as Josephus, Milner, Mosheim, Fox, Prideaux's Connection, Rollin, Gibbon, a history of the Jews, of Turkey and Modern Europe, and of the French Revolution, furnish, will go a great way in throwing historical light on the word of prophecy. It is a remarkable Providence that the infidel historian Gibbon should furnish the chief historical light to interpret the books of Daniel and Revelation.*

Prophecy is the narration of things to be done, history that of things done: prophecy cannot therefore be complete without history, for its fulfilment must be sought in history; history is not only the light of the times, but the light of prophecy. But still it should not be supposed that no one can read the prophetic word profitably, unless accurately instructed in history. This is the attainment of very few, and if so, few would attain the advantage of the study of prophecy, and this most noble study would be confined in a narrow compass. It is sufficient, therefore, for ordinary students to have some more compendious knowledge of the greater changes which have happened in the state of the world, and especially of the church. But in a public interpreter of the prophetic word, a more accurate knowledge of [26] history and greater skill is required.† *Geographical* knowledge should be added to Histori-

* Mr. Davis published an examination of part of Gibbon's History, and a reply to his Vindication, 8vo. 1778-9. See also Bishop Watson's Apology for Christianity.

† There is in some of the modern expositions of the books of Daniel and the Revelation, a mass of historical and ecclesiastical information, that repays the perusal of those expositions, though it be too often misapplied to the particular prophecy. But it is to be regretted that there is no little manual of history, (as far as the author knows) something on the plan and scale of Edward's History of Redemption, or Bossuet's Universal History, for the express purpose of illustrating prophecy. In such a history, illustrating prophecy as is here

cal. Reland and Wells, with good scriptural maps, will be valuable helps to us.

11. KEEP IN VIEW THE GREAT END OF ALL PROPHECY, CHRIST JESUS. "To testify concerning Christ as the Messiah and Saviour of the world, was the one grand purpose of the Scripture Prophecies, to which other topics were only collateral and subordinate. Many of these relate to his personal character and office: others to the establishment and progress of his spiritual kingdom. Divines have accordingly arranged the prophecies concerning Christ under two general heads, dividing them into such as relate to his *first* coming, which had their full and entire completion in his person; and such as relate to his *second* coming, comprising a long series of events preparatory to that final close of the Christian Dispensation, some of which are already accomplished, others are now fulfilling, whilst others are still awaiting their completion at some distant period. The prophecies respecting the rise or fall of particular persons, families or states, have reference [27] in most, if not all, instances to the same object."* Whatever is told us of one to come, not named, but emphatically glorious, which cannot be shewn to be fulfilled in any other, is to be viewed as belonging to Christ. Deut. xviii. 18; Psalms viii., xvi., xxii., xl., lxix., lxxxviii., cxviii. 22, 23: Isaiah iv. 2, vii. 14, 15, xlii. 1, liii. 1, 2; Zech. iii. 8, xii. 10. The same scriptures declare also his sufferings and humiliation mingled with his glory. Psalm lxix.; Isaiah liii. The scripture turns on this point, his sufferings and his glory; its lines meet in this centre, and this makes the study of it so sweet and delightful to one who loves his Saviour. It all relates to his beloved Master's person, coming, return, kingdom and glory. The predictions of scripture may, in fact, all be comprehended in one view: they are the unfolding of the first prophecy, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This contest goes on through all ages; and the predictions, while they almost invariably include the crisis and close of the warfare and the full triumph of the Redeemer, are given in such comprehensive wisdom, as to be constantly instructive and applicable in all the varied parts of that war

suggested, the lesser events are not the things to be dwelt upon, but the greater and more deciding changes which have controlled and overruled the history of nations, and those that are more immediately connected with the church of God. A friend suggested the idea that a Religious History of the French Revolution is a work to be desired in this view. Alison's History gives Historical information.

* See Van Mildert's Sermons, vol. ii. 353, 354.

which is ever raging between the seed of the woman, Christ and his church, and the seed of the serpent, Satan, and the children of that wicked one.

12. REMEMBER ONE GREAT USE OF PROPHECY IS THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE HEART. It is not the mere understanding of the meaning of the prophecy, that is valuable, unless it has a holy and edifying [28] influence on our life. It is not merely, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy—but there is a farther end—and *keepeth* those things that are written therein." (Rev. i. 3.) The design of the prophecies is not only instruction and consolation, but also being made holy. The varied times and circumstances of the Church described in the prophets, teach us the peculiar duties suitable to those times, and strongly bind us to the performance of those duties. Thus we are taught how we may stand in the post of observation as faithful watchmen—steadily regarding the steps of Providence, and looking to the glorious end and issue of all the griefs and afflictions of the church, and of our own also, if we are steadfast in faith and hope, breathing out the ardent desire and hope of the church, *even so come, Lord Jesus!*

We speak not as if prophetic knowledge and an expectation of the near advent of Christ were necessary to our salvation. A great difference must be made between what is necessary and what is profitable. What is necessary, is simply *faith working by love*. Gal. v. 6. But things may be very helpful, and profitable, and quickening to our souls, that are not needful to the existence of spiritual life. And in this view it must be remembered how much the promises of salvation are connected with *looking for Christ*, (Hebrews ix. 28; Titus ii. 13; Phil. iii. 20; 2 Pet. iii. 12;) and *loving his appearing*. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) A practical expectation of the coming of Christ has many special promises, and is a peculiar character of those who will be accepted of him in the day of his appearing. And this is the more important to us now, when so distinct and extended a testimony has [29] been borne to this truth by the servants of Christ. By not attending to and keeping the saying of prophecy, you lose also a blessing which God has promised. Rev. xxii. 7. And who is so spiritually rich as to be willing to lose one blessing?

Prophetical, however, like all other parts of divine knowledge, may only *puff up*; and we should be sensitively alive to this danger. There can hardly be imagined a more subtle snare of the enemy than that a man should become acquainted with an important part of divine truth, obnoxious even to Christians in general,—that he should "have the gift of pro-

phesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge," (1 Cor. xiii. 2,)—that he should confess the truth and suffer reproach for it, and all the while have merely the system and theory, and be without the grace of the truth. What a prayer is that of our Lord; *Sanctify them by thy truth!* John xvii. 17. Truth applied to the heart by the Holy Ghost, is sanctifying. It should be our desire, that our religion may not be merely that which nature can attain, but that which by its fruits is proved to be supernatural and divine; thus shall we now be "the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" (Eph. ii. 10.) and so shall we be found at the last to have "oil in our vessels with our lamps when the Bridegroom cometh." Matt. xxv.

To these practical Rules the author would add a few CAUTIONS.

1. DO NOT BE STUMBLING AT THE VARIOUS AND OPPOSING INTERPRETATIONS OF LEARNED AND GOOD MEN. In events, whether fulfilled or yet to be fulfilled, where we have no infallible interpreter, this was to be expected. It is so in all subjects human [30] and divine. Even the inspired *prophets* themselves, (1 Peter i. 10,) "who prophesied of the grace that should come, inquired and searched diligently, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow." If they had to inquire and search diligently to ascertain dates and periods, and only obtained a general knowledge "that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things *which* are now reported unto you;" no wonder that human writers come to different conclusions. But do not imagine on that account that the search is vain for you, and the study hopeless and unprofitable. Far, very far from it. Leading views you may obtain of the utmost value.

Bishop Van Mildert justly remarks "those who duly consider the prodigious extent and complicated nature of the plan of prophecy, will not only be convinced that to devise and execute it, is far beyond the power of man; but will be prepared to meet with something of intricacy and even obscurity in the detail of the plan, which the limited powers of the human understanding may not be able completely to unravel. They will perceive that a scheme of divine wisdom, to be carried on through all ages of the world, and embracing an infinite diversity of times, persons, and places, must require means to conduct and unfold it, of which it is impossible that man should be a competent judge. Hence they will be led to examine the subject with humility and reverence.—But whatever

shade of doubt and difficulty may still hang over some particular predictions (concerning which the most learned and sagacious may continue to entertain some difference of opinion), [31] it is nevertheless impossible for any unprejudiced persons to deny, that there is a prodigious mass of solid and incontrovertible evidence to be collected from history in verification of the scripture prophecies."

They are excellent remarks of a very able modern writer, "Justice is to be exercised in judging of the opinions and statements of others. This constitutes candour. It consists in giving a fair hearing to their opinions, statements and arguments, and weighing fairly and honestly their tendency. It is therefore opposed to prejudice, blind attachment to preconceived opinions, and that narrow disputatious spirit, which delights in captious criticism, and will hear nothing with calmness that is opposed to its own views: which distorts or misrepresents the sentiments of its opponents, ascribing them to unworthy motives, or deducing from them conclusions which they do not warrant. Candour accordingly may be considered as a compound of justice and the love of truth. It leads us to give due attention to the opinions and statements of others; in all cases to be chiefly solicitous to discover truth, and in statements of a mixed character, containing perhaps much error and fallacy, anxiously to discover and separate what is true. It has accordingly been remarked, that a turn for acute disputation and minute and rigid criticism is often the characteristic of a contracted and prejudiced mind, and that the most enlarged understandings are always the most indulgent to the statements of others; their leading aim being to discover truth."* The only danger [32] in this is, lest any thing of a doubtful and sceptical spirit should creep upon us. It is to be guarded against by the deepest reverence for the word of God, and entire submission to all its plain statements.

2. Remember an important DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FACTS PREDICTED, AND THE TIME WHEN THEY SHALL TAKE PLACE. Respecting the facts predicted, we may attain a much greater degree of knowledge and confidence than we can respecting the time. The history of the interpretation of prophecy shews this. The most able expositors† have anticipated events. Their works are not useless on that account, indeed, for the explanation of the event may be correct, when that of

* See that truly valuable work, *The Philosophy of the Moral Feelings*, by John Abercrombie, M. D. p. 57, 58, a book well calculated to undermine and overthrow many false principles of modern liberalism or infidelity.

† This is remarkably the case with the writings of Brightman, Mede, and Cressener.

the time is wrong. I deny not also that it is our duty to search into the time and to state our conclusions modestly, especially as we come nearer the end, when there are special promises of light and knowledge. (See Dan. xii.) But as Gurtler justly remarks, "we should not rashly or confidently define the moments of future time, in which those remarkable works of God, which are to take place in the world, and in the church, are to be accomplished. (Acts i. 7. Mark xiii. 32.) To hold the thing revealed tends to piety and comfort; the time of that which is future, if scripture shews any thing concerning it, it is right and proper to meditate upon; but accurately to fix the time before it arrives, is a fruitless attempt."*

The chief triumph of those who would discourage the study of prophecy, has been the failure of many [33] who have specified particular times; and it may be asked, Why has God, who promised such a blessing on the study of prophecy, permitted this? Not merely to humble the pride of human wisdom, nor merely to make prophetic writers more cautious, but also with regard to his people, to try their faith in the clearly predicted event, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the time; and with regard to his enemies, who hate him and his word, that they might be stumbled and hardened; and so their wickedness manifested, and the divine justice in their everlasting condemnation be made clear."†

3. DO NOT BE OFFENDED AT THE REPROACHES TO WHICH THE PROFESSED EXPECTATION OF THE COMING OF CHRIST EXPOSES YOU, from all classes of men. It is the generation truth, that is, the one which is peculiarly important in this generation, and opposes the whole stream and current of men's opinions by the simple testimony of God's word, and therefore it is the truth every where spoken against. A well-instructed Bible Christian will not be stumbled at this, and when he has carefully searched the foundations, and is perfectly satisfied that he has the word of God to rest upon, will hear with the utmost calmness the charges of the Millenarian epidemic, dangerous novelties, fanciful schemes, and a thousand other names by which men will endeavour to swamp all these truths without coming to the plain statements of scripture. The most painful thing is, when [34] the truly pious join in these things, and, like Peter to his Lord, say, (Matt. xvi. 22.) *Be it far from thee;* but he who has once himself been thus pre-

* See Gurtler's Systema, p. 55.

† If the mistakes as to particular times of Mede, Lloyd, Allix, Jurieu, Cressener, and others, had deterred men from pursuing these studies or from availing themselves of their works, we should never have had the valuable researches into Prophetic times of Prideaux, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, not to speak of living expositors.

judiced, and has seen in his own painful, past, personal experience, that "prejudice has neither eye nor ear," will readily make allowances for such a state of mind, and by patient forbearing, and loving manifestation of the truth, commend it to the consciences of all men.

4. **GUARD AGAINST HUMAN SYSTEMS.** It is very observable how much some men have been carried away by a favourite system, so as to think that it is entwined with every part of the word of God, and explains every difficulty. They seem to suppose, that one key will turn all the locks, and open every door of every room and every cabinet in that room. There are many locks in scripture; outside locks and inside locks, and we must take the particular key which will open, first, the general lock, and then the one we want to have opened; or we shall only wrest the scriptures. But here is our comfort—the Bible itself contains the keys for its treasures, and the Holy Spirit will guide us (if diligently sought for) into all truth.

Each human system also is more or less connected with some error, and those who pursue prophetic studies, and hold the speedy coming of our Lord, have special need to be on their guard against those errors which the enemy has contrived to associate with that truth. Some of these errors are more serious than others, but the tendency of all error is to famish the soul. We may see hence persons hold the highest and newest flights of doctrine, and yet proud, censorious, dogmatical, severe, covetous, [35] worldly, lovers of pleasure, and sunk in earthly lusts. O how offensive this must be to the pure, holy, and heavenly Saviour! It is a great preservative against such things, to keep constantly before us the spirit which our Lord commends in the beatitudes, and practical epistles like those of St. James and St. Peter. "To ask also for the old paths, where is the good way, and to walk therein, *is the means to find rest for our souls.*" Jer. vi. 16.

If we are indebted to another for the first views of divine truth, we are greatly in danger of leaning upon him, and being carried away with all his views. This is to lean on an arm of flesh, and not on the Lord, (Jer. xvii. 5,) and to refuse to follow the beautiful example of the Bereans, who went no farther with the Apostle himself, than a diligent search of the scriptures justified. Acts xvii. 11.

5. **BE NOT AFRAID TO SUSPEND YOUR JUDGMENT** about more obscure and hidden things. Vitringa applies Isaiah xxviii. 16, here: *He that believeth shall not make haste*; he will resign to the Deity the scope of executing his vast designs. It is thus our blessed Saviour taught his disciples to wait the event of his prophecies, *In your patience possess ye your souls*, Luke xxi.

19. Where the completion is still future, we must not indulge our conjecture, but as becomes the faith and moderation of Christians, those things which are spoken indefinitely, and are not determined by parallel prophecies, we should consider as reserved in the hands of God, with respect to the mode and persons, times, places, and other circumstances of their completion. Whether Christ and his saints shall personally be visible in their reign over the earth; what may be the precise nature of [36] his kingdom, or of the destruction of his enemies which precedes its establishment; these and a thousand similar questions may, without any damage to the soul, be left in the hidden state in which they seem now to be left by the scriptures, till God shall throw more light upon them by the researches of his servants, or events shall fully develop them.

6. NEGLECT NOT PROPHECY BECAUSE OF THE ERRORS, CONTROVERSIES and misinterpretations of THOSE WHO HAVE INTERPRETED IT. It is perfectly clear, by events, that those who have written on this subject have made great mistakes; we have the advantage of living in a later period, and of having these mistakes manifested. Some, in these days, prominent in their prophetic statements, have, in the Author's view, fallen into doctrinal errors; an unchristian spirit of judging, and condemnation of others, or even serious delusion; or a rash spirit of throwing aside all preceding labourers. Was it not the artifice of the enemy to destroy the power of those weighty truths which prophetic writers have distinctly brought forward, and especially to turn the attention of the church from the prophetic word? There is, however, a plain direction, (1 Thess. v. 20,) *Despise not* (*μὴ ἐξουθενήτε*, do not set at nought, or count for nothing,) *prophecies*. The same thing took place at the time of the Reformation, and Gurtler has some valuable remarks upon it. He says, that, "After the beginning of the sixteenth century, the gospel being recovered from anti-christian darkness to light, many interpreters employed themselves in the Exposition of the Prophecies; but at the end of that century the ardour for this most [37] divine study began to cool in the churches and schools," and he states one principal cause of this lamentable issue to be, the unhappy disputes which arose among Protestants; in Germany between the Lutheran and Reformed; and in Holland between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants: from the origin of these disputes, controversial volumes were sent forth, rather than Commentaries on the Sacred books. Afterwards another thing arose, from which the study of prophecy was not only despised by irreligious men, but also by learned and even pious persons.

Some came to treat of it with unwashed hands, and an unsuitable mind; for enjoying riches of genius, and facility of writing, and blandishments of language, they promulgated the fulfilling of prophecies in that immediate nearness of time and place, which inconsiderate hope, impatience under undeserved calamities, and too great love of their country dictated. Gurtler shews also how others failed in their predictions of an immediately happy state of the church; and adds, "books of this kind were eagerly read, translated into different languages, and filled the minds of the curious; but, by and bye, the event not answering to the promises, where only the vanity of the writer was to be reprehended, the holy prophetic Theology was, after the manner of the age, carped at, and despised; and the wisdom of the prophecy of the supreme King of Kings, knowing, determining, and foretelling all things, was given up to oblivion." He then shews how God rescued, by his Spirit, the church out of this state, by raising up such men as Brightman, Mede, More, and Hofman.

Gurtler then, after giving the system of Mede and [38] others, had these interesting reflections:—"I will not carp at the structure delineated by these learned and pious men, or subject it to my censure, for I had rather congratulate them on that eternal blessedness in which they now enjoy God, and more thoroughly and entirely know his works. In this life, *we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*, (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10,) and we shall clearly see these things which we now conjecture, or inquire into with much labour; or altogether are ignorant of. As the human mind of the Son of God, which with the angels knew not on earth the day and hour of judgment, (Mark xiii. 32,) in heaven, had given to him, and perceived the whole history of the world and the church. Rev. i. 1—3."

May we learn lessons from past experience, and especially the lesson of not neglecting any part of God's word, and being turned aside by the enemy to despise prophecyings from the faults of those who have studied it. God has given increased light, age after age, to his church on this subject, and should even some material parts of the views of the leading modern interpreters turn out to be pre-anticipations, or unfounded interpretations of what God has foretold, may we, notwithstanding such stumbling-blocks, *take heed to that which is still the more sure word of prophecy*, (2 Pet. i. 19,) *the light shining in the dark place*, and only pray the more earnestly that our *love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judg-*

ment, that we may try things that differ (σπειρουζεν τα διαφορετα) and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Phil. i. 9.

Plan of Study of Prophetical Writers.

[39] The author having several times been requested to give a little plan of study, subjoins the following:—

Older Works.

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|---|--|
| Hurd's Introduction to the Study of Prophecy. | Bishop Newton on the Prophecies. |
| Mede's Key to the Apocalypse, and Letters. | Cressener's Demonstration of the Revelation. |
| Sir I. Newton on Daniel and the Apocalypse. | Cressener's Judgments on the Romish Church. |
| | Home's Millennium, new edition. |

Modern Works.

| | |
|--|---|
| Brooks' Elements of Prophecy. | Cuninghame on the Seals and Trumpets. |
| Keith's Evidence of the Christian Religion. | Faber's Restoration of the Jews, 2 vols. 8vo. |
| Myers on the Prophecies delivered by Christ. | Fry on the Second Advent, 2 vols. 8vo. |
| Woodhouse on the Apocalypse. | Greswell on the Parables, vol. i. |
| Abdiel's Essays. | Habershon on the Prophecies. |
| Cuninghame's Premillennial Advent. | The Investigator, a Quarterly Periodical. |
| Faber's Sacred Calendar, 3 vols. 8vo. | White's Practical Reflections on the Second Advent. |
| Cuninghame's Answers to Wardlaw, Faber, and the Theological Magazine, and his Political Destiny. | |

Latin Books.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Vitringa Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae. | Vitringa Anacrisis Apocalypseos. |
| | Venemæ Dissertationes in Daniel. |

It will be easy to enlarge this list from the books in the list at the end. The translation of the "Typus Doctrinæ Propheticae" of Vitringa would be very useful to the English student of Prophecy.*

The purpose of Cocceius in his prophetical studies will be a good guide for us in ours. He says—"We [40] therefore, with the blessing of God, will so act, as to attend to the scriptures (as lucid, and having clear and by no means twisted or forced significations, conformed to itself in all its parts, and shining through the whole body of the sacred oracles according to the sincerity of the Divine Testament, and the truth which is in Christ Jesus) until a most clear sense, satisfying the conscience through the words of the Holy Spirit, shall rise up to refresh us. In which these things shall minister help to us. 1. The proper meaning of words. 2. The conformity or proportion of phrases and sentences. 3. The scope and series of ante-

* The most important parts have been, since this was written, translated and printed in the Investigator, vol. iv.

cedents and consequences. 4. Remarkable examples of the meaning of expressions shewn by the events fulfilling them. It cannot be that the words themselves should fully and exactly, in a series of examples, and in a consistent harmony of prophecies be verified, without its pointing out the mind of the Spirit."

CHAPTER III.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST.

[41] On that point which especially concerns our highest interest, even our eternal salvation, and which is the grand theme of all the prophets, from the beginning to the close, there is no obscurity of any moment; the first coming, the atoning death, the perfect righteousness, the resurrection and ascension, the supreme power, and the constant intercession, of our Divine Redeemer; the gifts of his Spirit; the subjugation of his enemies, and his certain return. On these points, the predictions are, in the main, clear as the noonday. Even those who deny their application to Jesus Christ, still refer them to the Messiah. Let it ever be remembered, then, that **THE PROPHECIES OF SCRIPTURE CHIEFLY BEAR ON THIS ONE POINT, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.** Their great design is to do honour to him, to manifest the sufficiency of his atonement, and the riches and fulness of his grace, and the nature and glory of his kingdom; that thus we may be led to believe in him, to the salvation of our souls, and be filled with joy and peace [42] in believing; and all the glorious ends for which he came might be accomplished; to deliver a world from ruin, to abolish sin and death; to purify man and make him a partaker of the divine nature, and finally so to bless the human race, that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven.

It is expressly said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. xix. 10. "To him give all the prophets witness." Acts x. 43."

There are many plain, express, and literal prophecies referring to Christ and his kingdom, which have no other application, and cannot be expected to have any other fulfilment than in him. The following instances have been selected as proving this:—Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6. Haggai ii. 6—9. Zech. ix. 9; xii. 10. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14; ix. 24—27. Micah v. 2. Isaiah liii.*

* A full table of the chief prophecies respecting Christ is given by Mr. Horne in his Introduction.

The due consideration of the many minute circumstances respecting our Lord's first coming, literally and expressly described so long beforehand; the many improbable and apparently contradictory events respecting him, which were foretold successively, for nearly four thousand years, connected with their exact accomplishment, as related to us by eye-witnesses who laid down their lives in confirmation of their testimony; and corroborated as that is by the actual state of the world at present;—such a consideration is peculiarly calculated to strengthen and establish our faith in Christ.

Especially, when we remember further, that those very prophecies are now in the possession of the [43] Jews—the avowed enemies of Jesus of Nazareth. They thus become unsuspected and unexceptionable librarians, living witnesses, testifying to all ages that the predictions have been preserved unaltered. If it be asked how it is that they are not themselves convinced, the answer is sufficient; multitudes were convinced by this very evidence, when the events had taken place, and the hardness of heart of others, and their rejection of Christ, were expressly foretold in the very same writings, and form an actual part of those prophetic records of which they are the depositories.

The exact literalness with which many of the minutest circumstances of our Saviour's life and death were foretold and then accomplished, the very town where he was to be born, the place where he was to begin to preach, his riding on an ass and a colt, the various kinds of sufferings which he was to endure, scourging, spitting upon, and casting lots for his vesture, his hanging on the tree, dying and not a bone broken; the rejection of him by his people; the union of them and the Gentiles and their rulers against him, these things are not only confirmatory as an evidence, but instructive as an interpretation of prophecy. If the shame and rejection have been minutely fulfilled, so shall the glory and future welcome of him: if the humiliation has been literally realized, so shall the coming kingdom.

There must doubtless have been many things, however, though now we distinctly see the literal fulfilment of the predictions respecting the first coming, which were extremely confounding to the Jews. Even the disciples of our Lord were staggered again [44] and again at the shame, the cross, and the sufferings of our Redeemer. The predictions of these were so brief, compared with the predicted glories of his kingdom, that the two disciples going to Emmaus after his resurrection, still only venture to say "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," and need the Saviour's exposi-

tion of the things concerning himself. Till divinely taught, they were disappointed at the mysteries of the cross and the delay of hope, and had to learn that lesson of faith and patient waiting which God is still teaching his church, with regard to the glories of his second coming. "But *blessed* were they who were not *offended in him* in all the lowliness of his first coming," (Matt. ii. 6.) and "blessed are all they that wait for him," (Isa. xxx. 18.) and "blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find *diligently employed in his service, and ready for his coming.*" Matt. xxiv. 44—46.

Let it also never be forgotten that our Saviour is now spiritually present with his church, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. This his spiritual coming and presence is of unutterable moment to us, "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." John xiv. 21. O may we enjoy it continually; it will especially make us long for the happy time when we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly; but face to face," (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) visibly meet and *ever be with our Lord.* 1 Thess. iv. 17.

The disregard by the Jews of the prophecies respecting our Lord's humiliation, and their consequent national rejection, is also full of instructive warning [45] to us.* If the neglect of those more obscure and less frequent prophecies which concerned his sufferings was attended with so fearful an issue, may not we Christians be justifying the Jews in their unbelief, and adding thereto fresh unbelief, if we disregard and disbelieve those far more numerous and clear prophecies which concern his future coming, kingdom, and glory. His spiritual presence is a blessing to his disciples; they experience, they enjoy it, but the world understands it not and cares not for it. His future visible coming does, however, speak directly to the fears and comprehension of all men. Our Lord tells his dis-

* The prophecies of the *first advent* have been treated of frequently and at length, and, with the New Testament to guide their interpretation of them, Christians have in general professed agreement in their views respecting them. Yet there is much room for fuller research even on these prophecies. The scope of the context in the original writer of each quotation; the reason of their dispersed form; the distinction of those parts of the prophecy which belong to the first advent from those relating to the second; the spiritual significance of the varied events of the life of our Redeemer,—all these give a wide field of thought and instruction little explored. Prophecy may justly be compared to a very deep, rich, and extended mine. Little of it is known on the outside, especially to the careless observer. We must enter into its hidden chambers, and go through it with diligent investigation, even to discover its treasures; and to be enriched by it, requires patient labour and appropriating faith.

ciples of his spiritual presence, (Matt. xxviii. 20.) he tells the high priest and all the council of his personal and visible coming in the clouds. Matt. xxvi. 64.

It is one great practical benefit of studying the prophecies, that we thereby *grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ*. All the prophecies are parts of *the testimony of Jesus*; they shew the fulness and extent of his propitiation; the freeness and completeness of his salvation; the safety of the people given to him; the amazing love which he bears to them; [46] the joy which he has in their bliss, and his purpose to glorify them for ever in his happy kingdom. The prophecies set before us all the gracious titles which he bears for them, and the offices which he sustains in their behalf. The most touching expressions of his care, faithfulness, and love abound in them, and *not one jot or tittle shall pass till all be fulfilled*.

Now, in the patient, prayerful reading of these, the soul is raised to sweet communion with our beloved Redeemer, and to delightful anticipations of a day when, freed from the body of sin and death, and with bodies fashioned according to his, we shall be like him, and see him as he is. "O when shall it be? when," says the soul of the believer, "shall I cease to grieve and dishonour him by my sins who has so loved me—I groan, being burdened, for that *I would be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life!*"

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL APPLICATION OF PROMISES IN THE PROPHECIES.

[47] The prophetic writings should be carefully read, not merely for the future events which they foretel, but as everywhere bearing the rich treasures of divine truth; and furnishing noble displays of the glory of God; and clear manifestations of the way of salvation, of the duties of the creature, and of his dependance on the Creator. They are full of deep doctrines; sweet promises; holy precepts, and heart-stirring motives to follow the will and to live to the praise of the great and eternal Jehovah. Their holiness speaks their divinity even before their fulfilment has made it a demonstration; their present usefulness declares the wisdom and loving-kindness of the Lord, even before their accomplishment has displayed his

omniscient eye, his omnipotent arm, his perfect equity, and his boundless grace.

Prophecy is like a richly-freighted vessel returning from a distant land, and conveying those on board it safely to their home. It contains all needful provision and comfort for the use of the crew during [48] the whole length of voyage, and besides this, it has a still more valuable cargo to be enjoyed by the owners, when the perils of the sea, and all its storms and tempests have been passed through. Though the passengers may be distant from their own land, they are gradually approaching nearer and nearer, and while they are sailing day and night homewards, every present want is supplied by the abundant stores which the vessel contains for their use: but the chief riches of the vessel are reserved for the end of the voyage. Let us look, then, now for a moment at the daily provision made for our immediate and personal wants.

In the Prophecies of the Old Testament are contained promises of the richest spiritual blessings. These belong to every Christian, through faith in Jesus, and thus have a fulfilment in reference to Christian believers, beyond their first fulfilment in reference to Israel and Judah, the children of Abraham, after the flesh.

The promises at any time made to the church of God, composed of true believers, belong to them in similar circumstances at all times. They display the will of Him who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, and who has given and revealed these promises as revealing his mind towards his people, and for the benefit of the church at large. The promises of spiritual blessings made originally to the Old Testament church, are now properly applied to, and really inherited by the Christian church, and will only be inherited by any as they believe in Jesus Christ.

This is so important a part of divine truth, that it calls for particular proof and illustration.

[49] The Jews derive their right to the promises of the blessings of the Messiah from the covenant made with Abraham: that covenant included promises that he should be a father of many nations: that his seed should be multiplied *as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore*; and that in his seed *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. Gen. xxii. 17, 18. Abraham was a father of many nations, literally; but the apostle shews in the 4th of Romans, that he is *the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised*. There is a seed not *only which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of our father Abraham, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations*. Rom. iv. 11—17. These are the

*children of the promise, as well as the children of the flesh.** Rom. ix. 8.

Jesus Christ is the uniting corner-stone of the Jewish and Gentile churches, "who hath made both one—an holy temple in the Lord." Ephes. ii. 11—22. He was the promised seed of Abraham in the fullest sense. Gal. iii. 16. By faith in him we are united to him, and become one with him; and in this way alone are either Jews or Gentiles true children of Abraham. Gal. iii. 25—29. Rom. ix. 6—8.

The Apostle speaks to the Hebrews of the superior privileges of the Christian Dispensation in these terms—"Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city [50] of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" Heb. xii. 22. plainly intimating, as the context sufficiently shews, that the Gentile Christians partook of the privileges of Mount Zion and the Jerusalem on which the blessing of God rested. St. Paul tells us, "there is a Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all, *in contradistinction from* the Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal. iv. 25, 26. It is evident that the Apostle includes in the Jerusalem which is above, (typified by Sarah) the whole church which has its origin from heaven, is espoused to Christ, and is the mother of all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are born of the Spirit by means of the word and ordinances which are dispensed in the church. It is plain, therefore, that following the Apostle, we are warranted in considering the promises of spiritual blessings to be conferred on Jerusalem, as belonging to the universal church of Christ.

Our Lord assured the Jews, that those who do not *the works of Abraham*, are not the true *children of Abraham*, though lineally descended from him. John viii. 39.

The Apostle shews at length, in Rom. iv. ix. x. xi. and Gal. iii. iv. that those who had not Abraham's faith had no interest in the spiritual blessings which he obtained. He shews that the promises of the Old Testament belong only to the true church, and will only be realized to each true believer. While he excludes the literal Israel, not believing in Christ, (Rom. ix. 7, 8, 31; xi. 7.) he expressly says to the Gentiles, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according

* Bishop Hall uses far too strong language. He says, "Whosoever shall have duly digested this distinction, will easily find how wild a paradox it is to tie those frequent and large promises of the prophets made to Judah, Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem, to a carnal literality of sense, and to make account of their accomplishment accordingly, which were never otherwise than spiritually meant." We may take all the benefit of promises of spiritual blessings, and still know that the prophecy has a yet more extended literal interpretation, and that pregnant also with far more extended spiritual blessings.

to the promise." Gal. iii. 29. See also Rom. ii. 28, 29; iv. 11, 16; ix. 6—8. 2 Cor. [51] xi. 22. Gal. iii. 14, 26—28; iv. 25, 26. Eph. ii. 1 Peter ii. 9.

In this way the Apostles continually use the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. The oath sworn to Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) is applied to all believers, the heirs of promise. Heb. vi. 13—20. The promise given to Israel, (Deut. xxxi. 6.) "he will not fail thee nor forsake thee," and repeated to Joshua, (Joshua i. 5.) the Apostle quotes (Heb. xiii. 4, 5,) as belonging to believers in general. Is it not clear, therefore, from the Apostle's application of the promise, that believers under the Christian Dispensation may rely on the promises made to the faithful under the Jewish? Jerusalem, Zion, and in fact the whole Mosaic Dispensation, were in some important respects types of the spiritual church of Christ, and we may be well assured that the promises and prophecies which concern the types have a yet more important reference to the antitype. Nor can we suppose that the many spiritual promises belong only to the inferior or antiquated dispensation, from which believers under *the better covenant established upon better promises*, are altogether excluded.

The prophecies in the 2d of Joel are quoted by St. Peter in the first instance as fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, in the gifts of the Spirit to the Jewish church: while a promise there mentioned is also adverted to by St. Paul as belonging to all believers. Rom. x. 13.

The prophecy in Isaiah liv. 1, which, at first sight, might appear simply to belong to Judah, is thus applied by St. Paul in the Gallatians, (iv. 26—28.) to the whole church of Christ—"Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all: for it is [52] written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, (that is, who believe in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile,) as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." Gal. iv. 27, 28.

We might think that Hosea i. 10. and ii. 23, applied only to Israel; but the Apostle applies them more extensively—"to us whom he hath called; not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, as he saith in Hosea, I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. ix. 24—26.

We are not here contending against a further fulfilment of such prophecies, but making as clear and as manifest as we

can, the all-important point of the propriety of their application to Christians. Supposing that these are prophecies which may be yet more literally and extensively fulfilled in a primary sense respecting the Jewish nation, yet the promises which they contain are every day fulfilled to real Christians, and are justly applied to them. Thus the promises of the new covenant, in the prophecy contained in the 30th and 31st of Jeremiah, are applied by the Apostle, in the 8th of Hebrews, to believers under the Christian dispensation, and belong to all real Christians.

These examples of the New Testament application of the Old Testament prophecies, must not be overlooked when we speak of any future literal accomplishment respecting the Jews.

In this general application of the sacred writings [53] there is *neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all and in all*, (Col. iii. 11); in this general view, *all scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

The Bible thus remarkably adapts itself to the wants of mankind, and becomes the statute book and the great charter of salvation for the whole world. Thus the accumulating and enriching blessings of the various divine dispensations belong to every living soul believing in Jesus Christ, and shall, in the fulness of time, flow to, pervade, and bless every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue. Some have endeavoured to shew that no such passages as we have quoted, ought to be applied to the Christian church, except where we have the authority of Christ and his apostles; but surely the way in which they apply the prophecies is rather given as an example of the way in which we may do so.

It strengthens these considerations when we remember that the scriptures speak so much of the Jewish rites and ordinances as being of a typical character, and as prefiguring future and heavenly things. Heb. viii. 5; ix. 9; x. 1; 1 Cor. x. 1—11. It was temporary and preparatory to the full establishment of a more permanent system. Heb. viii. In the Epistle peculiarly addressed to the Jewish nation, the apostle, instead of giving any intimation of a re-establishment of their particular dispensation, shows that it was to be removed, that that *immoveable kingdom*, which he calls *those things which cannot be shaken, may remain*. Heb. xii. 26—28. This, however, we must remember the apostle teaches, is [54] a kingdom yet to be established after the shaking of the things that are made, which is yet to take place. *There are good things to come*. Heb.

ix. 11; x. 1, of which Christ is the priest; *a world to come*, Heb. ii. 5; vi. 5, which we have not yet witnessed.

Having given this scripture illustration of the subject, many human authorities need not be added, Mr. Lowth's remark in his preface to the commentary is perfectly just—"All the privileges appropriated to the Jews in the Old Testament, as God's peculiar people, do, in a more eminent manner, appertain to the church of Christ, which is the true kingdom of God, the Jerusalem coming down from heaven, of which the earthly Jerusalem and the temple there, was only a type and figure."

This view of the subject is important to be thus fully established, as it not only respects the full interpretation of prophecy, but the right of Christians to all the promises of the Old Testament. Hereby "all the promises of God in Christ, are yea, and in him, amen: unto the glory of God by us." 2 Cor. i. 20.

In this view, the Psalms are appointed by the Church of England to assist the daily devotions of her worshippers. Bishop Herne's introduction to his Commentary forcibly shews the truth and solidity of this mode of interpretation; and the Commentary itself, without defending every particular, in general wisely and beautifully illustrates and exemplifies it.

It shews how judiciously and how piously, and with what edification, the promises of the Old Testament may be thus expounded, and how easily and naturally they express the devout feelings of the Christian believer.*

* It may be interesting to the reader to see the way in which the above view is, in the main, confirmed by different writers; though we allow that several of the quotations go much too far, and would exclude the literal interpretation of prophecy altogether. Investigation and events have thrown a light around prophecy, which these authors did not possess in their day, and would now thankfully improve. Augustine shows, in his Treatise on the City of God, (Book 17, chap. iii.) that the promises concern partly the bond-woman bringing forth into bondage, that is, the earthly Jerusalem, and partly the free city of God, the true Jerusalem, eternal and heavenly, whose children are pilgrims on earth in the way of God's word: and there are some which belong to both, properly to the bond-woman, and figuratively to the free; for the prophets have a triple meaning in their prophecies, some concerning the earthly Jerusalem, some the heavenly, and some both. As I think it a great error in some to hold no relation to things done in the Scripture more than mere historical, so do I hold it a great boldness in them that bind all relations of *Scripture unto allegorical reference*, and therefore I avouch the meaning in Scripture to be triple, and not two-fold only."

Bishop Hall, writing against those who had, in his days, carnal notions of a Millennium, speaks in much too sweeping a way; he says, "their general fault is that they put a merely literal construction upon the prophecies, which the Holy Ghost intended only to be spiritually understood. Hence it is that those frequent predictions which we meet in every page of the prophets concerning the kingdom of Christ, the re-edifying of the Jewish cities, the pomp and magnificence of restored Israel, their large privileges, and marvellous achievements, are altogether drawn to a gross, corporal, and syllabical sense; which the judgment of the whole Christian Church, seconded by the event, hath

[55] The wisdom of God is thus wonderfully seen in so foretelling future events, that while they confirm the divine inspiration of the scriptures, and answer other important ends, as PREDICTIONS, accomplished or [56] accomplishing; they

upon good grounds, ever construed, not of the letter but of the spirit. The truth is, these prophecies have their reference either to God's merciful dealings with Jerusalem on their return from the Babylonish captivity; or by an usual allegory, express his gracious purposes to the church under the Gospel." See Bishop Hall's revelation Unrevealed. The Author, as it will be seen, by no means concurs in the restricted view of Bishop Hall.

Dr. Owen says on this subject, "Those promises which we find recorded concerning Zion, Jerusalem, the seed of Abraham, Jacob, Israel, respect the elect of God called to the faith of Abraham, and worshipping God according to his appointment, of what people or nation soever they be." See Dr. Owen on the Hebrews, Exercitations vi. and xviii.

Mr. Lowth, the author of the Commentary, observes, in his directions for reading the Scriptures,—“A particular, very observable in those prophecies which relate to the times of the Messiah, is the mystical sense of several passages in them contained under the literal, of which we may assign several examples. As (1.) When the prophets describe him under such characters as have a more immediate aspect upon some eminent person in or near their own times. 2 Sam. vii. 13, &c. Psalm ii. 6, 7; xlv. and lxxii.; lxxxix. 26, 27. Haggai ii. 23, &c. Zech. vi. 11, 42. (2.) When they represent the redemption of mankind which he was to accomplish by such expressions as do in their first and primary sense allude to some temporal deliverance which God had vouchsafed, (Psalm lxviii. 22, 23.) or would vouchsafe to their own nation. Isaiah xl. 3, &c.; xlix. 8, &c.; lii. 7, &c.; lx. 1, &c. Or, lastly, when they set forth the benefits of the gospel by phrases taken from the forms of divine worship prescribed by their law.” Isaiah lx. 6, 7; lxvi. 23; Zech. xiv. 16, 20.

He further shews, that “these providential congruities between the times of the Old and New Testament, as a learned writer styles them, do very much confirm the authority of both Testaments. From hence we learn that the Scriptures comprehend one entire scene of Providence, which reaches from one end of the world to the other: and that God, who is the beginning and end of all things, by various steps and degrees pursues one great design, viz. the setting up the kingdom of his Son, through the several ages of the world, and will still carry it on by such measures as seem best to his infinite wisdom, till the great day of the consummation of all things. Such a gradual opening of this wonderful scene of Providence is a new argument of that infinite wisdom which contrived it, and so fully justifies this mystical way of propounding it.”

Bishop Lowth also remarks in his Lectures, that, “In the sacred rites of the Hebrews, things, places, times, offices, and such like, sustain as it were a double character, the one proper or literal, the other allegorical; and in their writings these subjects are sometimes treated of in such a manner as to relate either to the one sense or the other singly, or to both united. For instance, a composition may treat of David, of Solomon, of Jerusalem, so as to be understood to relate simply either to the city itself and its monarchs, or else to those objects which in the sacred allegory of the Jewish religion are denoted by that city, and by those monarchs; or the mind of the author may embrace both objects at once, so that the very words which express the one, in the plain, proper, historical, and commonly received sense, may typify the other in the sacred, interior, and prophetic sense.” He afterwards illustrates this by a particular consideration of the 2nd and 72nd Psalm.

Bishop Hurd has many valuable remarks on this subject. He says, “The same oracles which attest the first coming of Christ, as if impatient to be confined to so narrow bounds, overflow as it were into the future, and expatiate on the principal facts of his second coming. By this Divine artifice, if we may so speak, the two dispensations, the Jewish and the Christian, are

cheer and comfort every individual believer, as **PROMISES** in which he has a personal interest.

At the same time, the way in which the promises [57] are assured to Christians, furnishes a most tender motive for the kindest consideration of the Jews. We can claim none of the promises of the Old Testament without being reminded of the lost sheep of Israel, and of our connection with their father Abraham as the channel by which the blessings flow to us. With such views, how inexcusable is contempt of, or indifference to the Jews! "Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Rom. xi. 18. But while we thus [58] take the present good of the promise, let us not be, like Esau, contented without our birthright, our new birthright if we may call it so, (John i. 12; iii. 5; Rev. xxii. 14,) and all the glory to come, infinitely richer in literal and spiritual glories than anything that the church has yet seen or enjoyed.

We are now, through faith in Christ, "*grafted in among the Jews, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.*" Rom. xi. 17. All the promises are literal to the Jews; they are received by us *in spirit* now, they will be fulfilled *manifestly*, and openly hereafter. But we now anticipate by faith the glories to come. In Isaiah ii. 2—6, we have the predicted glories of the earthly Jerusalem, and of the nations of the earth through it. And in Rev. xxi. 23—27, we have the glory of the heavenly city, and of the saved nations walking in its light; and in Heb. xii. 22—24, we have the way in

closely tied together, or rather compacted together, into one harmonious system. The events which both these prophetic schemes point out, are so distributed through all time, as to furnish successively to the several ages of the world the means of a fresh and still growing conviction."

Bishop Horne's introduction to his Commentary on the Psalms, as noticed above, dwells at considerable length on this mode of interpretation. He says, "The writers of the New Testament shew us that there is another Israel of God, other children of Abraham and heirs of the promise, another circumcision; another Egypt from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness through which they journey; other bread from heaven for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; and another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain and possess for ever."

It is allowed on all hands, that wisdom is needful in this application of prophecy. The literal meaning should ever be first attained, where the sacred text will evidently bear a literal sense. It has pleased the Holy Spirit also to reveal things in a variety of different ways. "Sometimes," says Bishop Lowth, "the obvious or literal sense is so prominent and conspicuous, both in the words and sentiments, that the remote or figurative sense is scarcely permitted to glimmer through it. On the other hand, and that more frequently, the figurative sense is found to beam forth with so much perspicuity and lustre, that the literal sense is quite cast into a shade, or becomes indiscernible." Let us not lean on our own or any other man's wisdom, so much as upon the constant teaching of the Holy Ghost and comparing scripture with scripture.

which we now by faith anticipate those glories, and of the heavenly conversation to which our hopes tend. In these varied views, then, the promises of the Old Testament have a most important application to us Christians.

CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD CHRIST.

[59] The second coming of Christ to be the Saviour of the world has ever been the hope of the church. A Saviour to come was its hope for 4000 years before he personally appeared on earth; and after he had lived and died "and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Heb. ix. 26,) a similar hope of his return was set before the church, as its great subject of expectation, in that explicit declaration of the angels, recorded Acts i. 11, "this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This was the great hope of the primitive church, and it is gratifying to see that this hope is revived in our day, especially when we remember the promise, that "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix. 28.

The last words of our Saviour and the last prayer of his church recorded in the scriptures, bear directly on this point, "he which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus." Rev. xxii. 20. Our blessed Master here seems, [60] before he leaves us, to turn and look back once more with infinite tenderness on his church, conflicting here below, in order to give to his people the parting assurance to support and encourage them amid every trial and difficulty, *Surely I come quickly*; and the church, then, turning as it ever should, a gracious promise into a fervent prayer, re-echoes the sound, *Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus*.

The whole history of the church of Christ had been testified in the preceding book of the Revelation. The sum of that testimony, however, was to declare, the varied trials through which his church should pass, the final overthrow of all the enemies of Christ, the full triumph of his kingdom at the last, the general judgment of all mankind; the everlasting misery of the wicked, and the complete and eternal happiness of his saints.

The coming of Christ has been viewed, either as it relates more generally to the manifestation of his secret Providence, by open judgment, or of his grace to individual Christians spiritually, or more particularly with reference to his personal and final coming to save his people and judge the world. It is this last which is eminently *his appearing the second time without sin unto salvation*. Heb. ix. 28.

The open manifestation of his secret Providence may be called indeed a *providential* coming, such as was his coming to destroy Jerusalem,* or such as is [61] his coming to an individual at the hour of death. There is also a *spiritual* coming, John xiv. 18, 23, to his people, largely enjoyed through the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and revivals of religion in any particular period, and daily experienced by the devout believer. The context of the passage, the mode of expression, or the circumstances of the writer will sufficiently point these out, and distinguish them from his final coming.

Thus a person may be present by energy and invisible power. God is every where thus present. Our Lord Christ is thus *always* present with his church, (Matt. xxviii. 20.) and manifests this presence spiritually to his people. But this does not preclude him from having place and abode with reference to his human nature. The expressions used to denote the second coming imply our Lord Jesus Christ, in his human nature moving from one place to another. Our God uses no deceptive language, his word is the word of truth and simplicity, and he leads us to expect a personal visible appearance

* See note in the Author's Chief Concerns of Man, page 246. There are some expressions on the coming of Christ, which not only Anti-Millenarians, but Mede also, with others who take his views, have applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, such as John xxi. 22. James v. 7—9. Heb. x. 37.—(See Mede's Works, p. 704.) But let it be remembered that whatever might be the private opinion even of the apostles who expected a speedy establishment of Christ's kingdom in their own days (Acts i. 6,) and were left in ignorance of the real time of his return, the expressions of the Divine Spirit, while they are infallibly true, are also adapted to that largeness of view which marks the eternity of God, (2 Peter iii. 8.) comprehends the whole of his Dispensations, and suits his revealed word to the wants of his Church in every age. In this view the passages in James and Hebrews may refer only to this second coming; the term *παρουσια*, James v. 7, 8, signifying personal presence. Some have supposed, Matt. x. 23, to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but it seems rather an illustration of the general principle, that if one place reject the gospel, it must be preached in another. They were not to be cast down and disappointed if all Israel were not converted, and a large part of the nation rejected the gospel, but to go on preaching it elsewhere. All Israel should not be thus complete till Christ come again: *ου μη τελειητε* you shall not complete or finish the conversion of Israel till our Lord's return. Thus there was a real help to the great duty of waiting for Christ's coming, a gracious guard against despondency, light on the future purposes of God, and a clear guide to duty. Events also have corresponded to this view.

[62] of our Lord Christ, in such passages as Acts i. 11. Matt. xxiv. 29—31. John xiv. 2, 3. 1 Tim. vi. 13—16. with very many others, some of which will be subsequently noticed. The distinction between *the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*, to be visibly *shewn by the blessed and only Potentate*; and the invisible God *dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see*, is very explicitly stated by St. Paul. 1 Tim. iv. 12—16. The distinction between the visible coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the spiritual fellowship his people have with him now in his absence is also clearly displayed. 1 Cor. i. 7—9. They were *waiting for his coming*, but they had been already *called into his fellowship*.

The event to which the New Testament mainly refers is his *future personal coming*. An event unspeakably terrible to his enemies and infinitely desirable to his people; they are described as “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus ii. 13.

The references to this event in the epistles to the Thessalonians are very frequent,* and the practical uses made of it are very diversified. It seems from the expression of St. Paul to the Corinthians, *ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*; 1 Cor. i. 7. as if waiting for this coming was the posture of mind in which it was peculiarly desirable that the Christian should ever be found.

And if we consider that the glory of God in the scheme of redemption will not be fully displayed, nor the happiness of the church completed, till that event takes place, we may easily conceive how desirable that event is.

[63] The church of England teaches her members, in the Funeral Service, to pray that, “God would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten the coming of his kingdom,” and this leads us to one blessed result of Christ’s coming. The church is a corporate body—that is, it is one body, and will not be completed till all the members of that body are gathered together. Nor will each individual member of that church be fully glorified till his own body is raised in glory and re-united to his spirit along with the whole church. The admission of the spirits of the just at death into paradise, is a joyful and desirable event; but we leave many beloved members of the church on earth, and the whole body of the church is also incomplete till the resurrection. Admission into paradise at death is then only a step onward to a yet more desirable event—the coming of the Lord, when the whole church

* Did the reader ever notice that each chapter of the first epistle closes with such a reference?

will be assembled, the bodies of the saints raised in glory, and all his people will ever be with the Lord. Death is *gain* to a believer, (Phil. i. 21.) it is among his privileges; but it is the resurrection at the coming of Christ that completes his happiness with that of the church of Christ at large.

The great points of controversy among Christians are not with reference to the actual and personal coming of Christ—all who believe the Bible, believe that he will thus come, for ever to bless his servants and punish his enemies. The question is rather when this second coming shall take place*—previously [64] to the Millennium, or subsequently to it; or, as some believe, without any Millennium yet to come on earth. The Author after lengthened consideration of the subject, believes that our Lord will come before the Millennium;† but he desires to view the subject more in the practical application than in minute anticipated declaration of future events. Though there may, through our ignorance, be difficulties that have not yet been cleared up; there is no difficulty at all in the general truth, and in its practical application.

On the second coming of Christ, the scriptures speak both fully and distinctly.

Of this coming the Apostle says, (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” Our Lord himself tells us “the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him, and then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.” Matt. xxv. 31.

The world in general mock at this, and say, “where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” The apostle calls such, *scoffers, walking in their own lusts*, and ignorant of God’s former dealings in the destruction of the world by the deluge, and says, “the day of the Lord will come as [65] a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt

* Mr. Faber’s view of a spiritual instead of a personal advent before the Millennium, is well met by Mr. Cuninghame in his critical examination of Mr. Faber’s Work, p. 118, &c. See also Mr. Cuninghame’s answer to the Edinburgh Theological Magazine, and his reply to Dr. Wardlaw, and also his premillennial advent. At least, let one of the ablest advocates of the premillennial personal advent be heard, before the doctrine be condemned, lest unconsciously men be found fighting against the truth.

† See his work on “Preparedness for the day of Christ.”

with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." He then adds the practical improvement of such immensely important events, saying, "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, and account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation." 2 Peter iii. 3—14. It is very affecting to consider that even professing servants of Christ, it is foretold shall say, *My Lord delayeth his coming*. Luke xii. 45. May we be kept from so great a snare of the enemy!

It is evident that this event is one of stupendous, overwhelming, and incalculable importance, and, one which the scripture ever, by its statements, leads us to consider as near at hand, and for which we ought to be prepared. It is considered to be before the Millennium, because (1) there seems no adequate reason why the word coming (*παρουσία*) signifying personal presence, (1 Cor. xvi. 17; 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7; Phil. i. 26,) should not mean personal presence in the various passages where it refers to our Lord's coming; (as Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 38, 39; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8; 2 Peter i. 16; 1 John ii. 28. (2) The man of sin, it is generally admitted, shall be destroyed before the [66] Millennium, and that is satted (Dan. vii. 11—13; 2 Thess. ii. 8,) to be at the coming (*παρουσία*) of the Lord, a coming previously described in terms that identify it with his personal coming, (1 Thess. and 2 Thess. ii. 1.)* (3.) The numerous expressions of the surprise with which this coming will take the world, as a snare and as a thief, its comparison with the deluge and the destruction of Sodom, and the directions to be ever looking for it, and the ground on which that direction is given, our ignorance of the day and hour when he comes, seem inconsistent with the idea of any certain intervening period of 1000 years. (4.) The express assertion of our Lord during the pouring out of the sixth vial, (which has been almost generally referred to the decay of the Turkish empire,) *Behold, I come as a thief*—connected as it is with all those passages which

* The word *παρουσία* is applied, 2 Thess. ii. 9, to the coming of Antichrist, and this may lead us justly to expect a personal, visible Antichrist heading the last apostacy, as well as that spiritual Antichrist which has so long been openly developed in Popery.

thus speak of his personal coming, leads us to the same conclusion. (5.) A spiritual advent has already taken place, and is already given to the church, (Matt. xxvii. 20; John xiv. 18, 23.) it seems therefore groundless to apply these passages to what already exists; our Lord is to come again in the same way he ascended in the clouds. Acts i. 11. (6.) We read, (Psalm cx. 1,) *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, our Lord will therefore remain there till that period; that is, as explained by Daniel, till *the Ancient of days, sit in judgment on the beast* (Dan. vii. 9—14.) and then he comes with the clouds of heaven to receive his kingdom: [67] His coming thus is after his ascension, and before his kingdom. (7.) We read (Acts iii. 19—21.) *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when (ὅταν, so that, Rose's Parkhurst, see Hosea v. 15.) "the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which (of which times) God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."* It is evident that "the times of refreshing," and "the restitution of all things" are to begin with the sending of Jesus Christ. (8.) It is in the time of hope of relief failing on the earth, (without any statement of an intervening Millennium,) that our Lord comes: *When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?* Luke xviii. 8. He is revealed when men are full of earthly mindedness, (Luke xvii. 26—30; his coming therefore cannot be a spiritual coming of gradually increasing holiness. (9.) Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled: then follows the distress of nations, and the Son of man coming in a cloud, and with these things the drawing nigh of redemption. Luke xxi. 24—28, whether we apply this to Israel's redemption, (Isaiah li. 11; lxiii. 4,) or the redemption of the saints, (Rom. viii. 19—23,) it is the kingdom of God nigh at hand, (Luke xxi. 31,) the personal coming of Christ before the Millennium. The general testimony of scripture on this subject will be however considered more at large in the next chapter.*

* The author has read, among other works, two recent ones against the præmillennial advent, and the literal interpretation of prophecy. The first is entitled, "Millenarianism Unscriptural, or a Glance at some of the consequences of that Theory." There is doubtless valuable scriptural truth in it, and a desire to be candid; but he can by no means agree in many a statement of the supposed opinions opposed, or of the arguments against them. It is easy to raise and overthrow imagined enemies. The compatibility of our views with our Lord's sacerdotal office may be seen fully in Mr. Cox's interesting work, "Our Great High Priest." There is too much vagueness, and,

[68] When Christ says, *Surely I come*, he, who is eminently the truth; and whose word, though *heaven and earth pass away, shall not pass away*, (Matt. xxiv. 35,) strongly intimates the general disregard and unbelief of man. The almost general despair of this among his people in the days of the last tribulation, is implied in his saying, (Mark xvi. 8,) "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" In few things is our practical unbelief more evident than in the great disregard of this in all our calculations. Men of the world altogether put it out of consideration. They scheme and plan for generation [69] upon generation here, but they plan not with reference to this overwhelming, approaching, and most certain event, which shall control every human scheme, set aside for ever all that God forbids, and introduce another era for the human race.

The coming of Christ is the leading subject of the Prophecies, both of the Old and the New Testament, either as it relates to his first or his second coming, and these are often intimately connected together, especially in the Old Testament. It may be useful, however to subjoin a summary of some principal passages which chiefly relate to his second coming, intermingled indeed with predictions of his first coming, but with larger events and promises, than have ever yet been realized.

The passages in which it is expressly treated are such as Psalms l. lxxii. xcvi. to cii.; Isaiah ii. xi. xxiv. to xxviii. and the xl. and remaining chapters. Jeremiah xxx. to xxxiii.; Ezekiel xxxvi. to the end. Daniel vii. viii. xii.; Haggai ii.; Zachariah xii. to xiv.; Matt. xiii. xxiv. xxv.; Mark xiii.; Luke

may I add, notwithstanding its ingenuity and talent, want of information in the work here noticed, materially to affect what the author believes to be the truth.

The second work is by Dr. Urwick, and entitled "the Second Advent of Christ the blessed Hope of the Church," in which the præmillennial advent is opposed with more skill and knowledge; but the author cannot consider with more real success. The grounds, for instance, taken in the following chapter furnish a complete scriptural answer to many imaginary difficulties. How would Dr. Urwick, who spiritualizes Micah iv. 1—4. spiritualize the connecting verses at the close of the preceding chapter? No doubt the passing away of 1800 years would not of itself shew the nearness of our Lord's coming; and here those who reject the year day may learn the need of the Chronological Prophecies to bring us to a waiting state of mind for our Lord's coming. The Chronological Prophecies were to be unveiled at the time of the end, on purpose to bring simple and candid minds to a due expectation and preparation, when delay had made these duties more difficult. Fully to answer these and other writers, would, however, require larger works even than their own. It is, however, really grateful to feel that attention is more directed to this subject. The coming of our Lord is now brought forward. The main and saving truths of the gospel are also earnestly pressed in both these publications, and though prophetic truth would be, he believes, an additional safeguard against the errors of these days, the author rejoices in that large ground of union and walking together as brethren, furnished by those primary truths.

xii. 31, &c. xvii. 20, xxi.; John xiv. 3; 1 Thess. iv. v.; 2 Thess. i. ii.; 1 Cor. xv.; 1 Tim. vi. 13, &c. 2 Tim. iv. 1—8; Romans viii. 18, &c. xi. Jude; 2 Peter; Revelation generally.*

[70] This is a RAPIDLY APPROACHING EVENT; *I come quickly* is an expression repeated four times in the [71] last chapter of the Revelation. Quickly indeed did the Lord begin to accom-

* The following summary (partly taken from a tract on the subject) may also assist the reader in referring to passages relating to the coming of our Lord.

From whence does he come?

From heaven. Acts i. 10, 11. Acts iii. 20, 21. 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 16.

How will he come?

In splendour and glory. Mark xiv. 62. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; xvi. 27.

Suddenly, when he is not expected.

As a thief. Matt. xxiv. 43, 44. 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 Peter iii. 10. Rev. xvi. 15.

As a snare. Luke xxi. 34, 35. Rev. iii. 3.

As the lightning. Luke xvii. 24. Matt. xiv. 27.

As the flood. Matt. xxiv. 37, 39. Luke xvii. 26.

As the destruction of Sodom. Luke xvii. 28, 30.

For what purpose did he come?

To destroy his enemies. Psalm ii. 9; cx. 5—7. Isaiah lxiii. 6. Mal. iii. 5; iv. 1. 2 Thess. i. 7—10; ii. 8. Jude 14, 15. Rev. xix. 11—15.

To raise the sleeping dust of his saints. Job xix. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. 1 Thess. iv. 14.

To change and glorify the living saints. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Thess. iv. 17. 1 John iii. 2.

To bring mercies to Israel. Rom. xi. 26. Isaiah xi. 11, 12. Dan. xii. 1. Psalm cii. 16.

To judge the earth. Jude 14, 15. Psalm xcvi. 13. Rev. xix. 11.

To take possession of it and reign over it with his saints. Psalm ii. 8; viii. 5, 6; cxlix. 5—9. Isaiah xxiv. 23. Daniel vii. 13, 14, 18, 22, 27. Zech. xiv. 9. Luke xxii. 29, 30. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; iv. 8. Rev. ii. 26, 27; iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

When will he come?

During the shaking of the powers of heaven. Luke xxi. 25—28. Matt. xxiv. 29, 30. Mark xiii. 24—26.

In a time of peace. Matt. xxi. 37—42. Luke xvii. 26—30; xxi. 34—36. 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.

Soon after the pouring out of the 6th vial. Rev. xvi. 15.

When unfaithful servants say in their hearts, "My Lord delayeth his coming." 2 Peter iii. 3, 4. Jude 14, 15, 18.

When the everlasting gospel shall be diffusing over the earth. Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

When judgments shall have been poured on the 4th empire. Daniel vii. 9—13.

When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke xxi. 24—27. Acts xv. 14—16. Romans xi. 25, 26.

What is our duty in reference to his coming?

Watchfulness. Luke xii. 37. Matt. xxiv. 42.

Prayer. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xxi. 36.

Waiting. 2 Thess. iii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 7.

Expectation. Titus ii. 13. Phil. iii. 20.

Preparation. Luke xii. 35, 36, 40. Matt. xxiv. 44.

To gain oil in our vessels. Matt. xxv. 1—13.

To lay out our talents for our Master. Matt. xxv. 14—30. Luke xix. 12—17.

To be thoughtful for his afflicted people. Matt. xxv. 31—46.

To have on the wedding garment. Matt. xxii. 11.

Mr. Fry's Work on the second Advent is designed purposely to bring the prophecies together on this subject, and to illustrate them.

plish that which he had testified, and rapidly is the course of events advancing along. (See the note, p. 246, in the Author's Chief Concerns of Man, on this topic.) Nothing can stop the progress of him whose very title is *ὁ ἔρχόμενος*, the coming one: Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19; Heb. x. 37. Any delay that may seem to take place is owing to his infinite compassion. "The Lord is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter iii. 9. It will come unexpectedly, sooner than the wicked think; soon, in comparison of eternity, and therefore quickly to all.

If this difficulty be felt; the promises of coming quickly were made to the church nearly eighteen centuries since, and how could it be true in their case, that he should come quickly, when it is clear that his coming must have been thus distant. We may reply, the whole of the case is not before us. For instance, we know that departed spirits are with Christ, and happy in him, but we know not how periods, long to us, may be rapidly passed through by a disembodied spirit. But more especially the simple and full reply is, the Eternal Spirit speaks according to the vastness of his own mind: 2 Peter iii. 8: and chronological prophecies are given, to assist us in discerning the times. Dan. viii. 13, 14; xii. 6, 7.

The practical inference that we may most profitably gather from the apparent delay of this great event is rather this: if they had to expect his coming quickly, much more should we who are so obviously much nearer the time. The Apostle says, [72] only a few years after the resurrection of Christ, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed: the night is far spent, the day is at hand." Rom. xiii. 11. In these days, after seeing the events which the church has witnessed, accomplishing so many of the prophecies of Revelation;—after seeing the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, so large a portion, if not the whole, of the 1260 years; after seeing the pouring out of the vials, (Rev. xiv.) and the wasting of the Papal and Mahomedan Antichrist, the general preaching of the gospel, and the stir among the Jews; the infidelity that is so widely diffused and so openly avowed; and all the agitating events of the present day, thickening as they are upon us,—every Christian has seen enough to say, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved, Hab. ii. 1—3,) and to listen to the admonition, "the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

No Christian can tell *the day nor the hour when the Son of Man*

cometh; and on this very ground every one is called to watchfulness and prayer, and to be like one *waiting for the return of his Lord*. Matt. xxiv. 42. If even it be thought that previously to his coming, there should be a millennium, or thousand years of blessedness on earth, it must be remembered, that our God repeatedly and constantly exhorts us to be watchful, and prepared for his coming suddenly: any view of a future millennium that would make this impracticable cannot be scriptural.

Have we not too much been accustomed also to [73] view the future coming of Christ as a solitary fact, rather than as a period, full of important events? The first coming of Christ occupied above thirty years, and varied events took place in it. May not his second coming also be a lengthened period? may it not also include a great variety of important events? On the order of future events, our knowledge must be in a measure obscure. And was not the very obscurity designed to have, among other advantages, this practical effect, that the church may never be without the privilege and duty of waiting for and expecting the quick return of its beloved and adored Head.

Let it then be remembered that all Christians agree that our Lord Christ shall come, and come suddenly, quickly, and *unexpectedly*. His own statement is express on this point—*Behold, I come as a thief*. WE MUST THEN LAY ASIDE ALL CONFIDENCE IN VIEWS THAT WOULD PRACTICALLY INTERFERE WITH IMMEDIATE PREPARATION FOR HIS COMING, and seek to attain the blessing connected with the announcement of his coming: “Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Rev. xvi. 15.

The varied ways in which the coming of Christ is explained tend to shew that a spiritual coming does not accord with the simple declarations of scripture. Some, in order to meet the numerous expressions of the suddenness of our Lord’s coming, deny that the Millennium is to come, and yet the order of the Apocalypse, and the conformity of this hope with innumerable promises both of the Old and New Testament, make this view so unsatisfactory that it is by no means generally entertained. Others think [74] *coming* may mean *death*; but this will not apply to the varied descriptions of his coming, and would make that which is the grand theme of prophecy an hourly and momentary event; coming after an apostacy, coming after the great tribulation, coming as the deluge, coming as the destruction of Sodom, coming as lightning, coming with the sound of the trumpet, coming with his holy angels, applies not to death. Others think that it can only be a *spiritual coming* before the Millennium in judgments and mercies;

founding this on Daniel's giving the expression, *the Son of Man coming in the clouds*, in the symbolical part of his prediction, the Ancient of Days sitting symbolically in judgment, and the Son of Man's coming in the clouds not being mentioned in the literal explanation. Dan. vii. 9—27. But God is essentially INVISIBLE; the Son of Man is VISIBLE, and the kingdom given to him is literally mentioned in the symbolical plan of the prophecy, just as it is in the literal explanation. His coming personally to establish his kingdom rests not on that passage alone, but on other passages that cannot be so escaped. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; 1 Peter v. 4.

The great diversity of these opinions, and the different plans for escaping from the force of plain expressions, may at least lead us to suspect that the mind naturally desires any thing rather than yield to the unwelcome fact of such an unparalleled interference with and disturbance, not only of all its preconceived notions, but of the whole present system and course of this world. Let us yield to the plain meaning of the words, and believe that *coming* means *coming*, the *Son of Man's coming*, means *the Son of Man's coming*; his *coming in the clouds*, (Acts i. 11.) [75] means *his coming in the clouds*, and our ignorance of the time and the suddenness of it, makes it impossible that there should be an intervening certain period of 1000 years yet to come; and we shall find consistency and rest in plain words. Thus we shall be enabled to yield up our minds with comfort and satisfaction to the obvious meaning of innumerable expressions throughout the word of God; without any jarring between our opinions, and the apparent statements of the Divine Record.

It is objected that death is the same to us as the coming of Christ. The practical duty of constant preparedness for this great change is clear. In the way of Providence, death comes suddenly to all: and though not with the same blessed hope, nor with the same purifying power, yet the shortness and uncertainty of life (James iv. 14; 1 Cor. vii. 29) is a quickening motive for deadness to the world and preparedness for meeting our God. That state of mind which is a due preparation for the awful change that death makes, prepares us also for the coming of Christ; death is a decisive day to us as individuals, fixing our state for ever. But, while a lively view of the coming of Christ is a great help to right preparation for death, it gives us also the enjoyment of a blessed hope, instead of the dread of an evil, all our days.

Though the practical use of a doctrine is not the ground on which we can prove it, as we are hardly competent judges on that point, yet it being often objected to premillennial views,

what is the real importance of them? does not death answer the same end in practice as the coming of Christ is expected to answer? It may, in addition to what has [76] already been said, be farther observed in reply: Death in itself is *the wages of sin*, and the dissolution of the body undesirable, (2 Cor. v. 4,) and an object of terror, rather than of hope; Christ's coming is from a covenant of love, terrible indeed to the wicked, but *a blessed hope* to the righteous. Death does not ordinarily come without some previous notice and time of preparation; our Saviour comes quite by surprise. We think we can ward off death by skill, and care, and medicine for a long time; there is no warding off the irresistible coming of the Lord. Death does not take away our possessions from our family and friends, and therefore does not effectually separate us from the love of the world; but our Saviour's coming is the entire destruction of all worldly plans, hopes, and prospects; takes away estates, mortgages, funds, titles, earthly reputation, and every thing on which the carnal heart builds, not only from us, but from our children, and leaves us and them nothing but the heavenly inheritance, and the promised glories of the Redeemer; and that *when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. Hence it is *he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure*. 1 John iii. 2, 3. The coming of Christ is then far more effectual to wean us from the world, and to lead us to bring up our children separated from it and dead to it, and living only for *the kingdom that cannot be moved*. Heb. xii. 28.

There are unhappily but few among real Christians whose faith and hope excite them to a holy *desire to depart and to be with Christ*. Phil. i. 23. There are very many, who from weakness of faith, and perhaps careless walking with God, *through fear of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage*. Heb. ii. 15. The [77] fears of such spring from this cause: they are afraid that they are not true disciples of Christ, and shall not be accepted by him; and though this state of heart probably arises from a SINFUL WANT OF FAITH IN AND SUBMISSION TO ALL HIS TRUTH, and is comfortless and unsatisfactory, yet if such are indeed born of God, their great desire is *to win Christ and be found in him*, Phil. iii. 8, 9; and could they be assured that they had an interest in Christ, and would be gathered with his sheep into the heavenly fold, they would look at death without terror. To assist such, I would direct them as the sacred writers do, not to look merely at death, but to look also at the coming of Christ. Death, though in one view a privilege, in another is the wages of sin, and a terrible enemy; but the return of Christ is a blessed hope full of joy, (Titus

ii. 13.) A lively faith in the coming of Christ, (1 Cor. xv. 23, 52—57) gives us the victory over death and all its sting.

Weigh much then the glories and blessedness of his return, till holy desires be kindled in your heart, and you have no hesitation in joining in the desire of the church, *even so, come, Lord Jesus*. Rev. xxii. 20. These words are, as if the church with ardent desire exclaimed, "Oh hasten thy coming,—let sin be abolished for ever, perfect holiness be given to thy people in glory, thine elect be gathered, their bodies raised, thyself admired in thy saints, and the transient glimmerings of this distant glory issue in seeing thee as thou art, and being ever with thee, O Lord. O Jesus, thou King and Saviour of thy church, accomplish the number of thine elect; finish the days of conflict; destroy the works of Satan; swallow up death in [78] victory; manifest thine own glory, and may we soon be with thee in that glory for ever and ever."

Such is the second advent of Christ, which is before his church. It is full of terror to all his enemies, for "he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. i. 9. O reader! be not, for all that this world can give, among those enemies. It is full of consolation to his people, for he *shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe*, ver. 10. O reader! may you and I be numbered among his believing saints.

Desire for Christ's coming is the very spirit of every Christian who truly loves him. The last sound of the church in the book of God, in reply to the promised quick coming of our Saviour, is, *Even so, come Lord Jesus*. The last note in the richest expressions of love to Christ abounding in the book of Canticles is, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices." The prayer our Lord himself has taught us ever to use is, *Thy kingdom come*. If we love our Saviour we must long to behold him. If now seeing him only by faith, *we rejoice with joy unspeakable*, how infinitely desirable must it be to see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD.

[79] It will be generally allowed by all who believe the word of God, that there is a time of universal peace, righteousness, and blessedness, promised to the church of Christ on earth: the question we would now consider is whether this time precedes or follows the coming of our Lord, in glorified humanity, to our earth. All real Christians know that he will thus come; but in these latter days many have thought, not only that this period of rest is yet to come, which we believe to be the truth, but that it is to come before our Lord's return. What then say the scriptures? We can only rest on scripture testimony. God will *be* found true, though *every man* be a liar; and of what is to come we can literally know nothing certainly but that which he has revealed. The subject is too large to introduce the full testimony of scripture; only specimens can be given.

There is a remarkable distinction which may be observed between the testimony of the Old and that of the New Testament, on this point. The old Testament [80] is very full of statements respecting a season of rest and glory, every where introduced by the coming of Christ. The New Testament, when our Lord had come, speaks of afflictions and sorrows and a mingled state of his people till a future coming, and then of a kingdom and a season of rest. The point of harmony between these statements will lead us to the scriptural view of the period of our Lord's return.

When the Old Testament prophecies were given, both the first and second comings of our Lord were future: it will prevent mistake respecting which of these is intended, first to consider **THE NEW TESTAMENT STATEMENTS** bearing on this subject, and then harmonize them with those of the Old Testament. May our God enable us to discern his truth!

1. **THE NEW TESTAMENT** is quite **SILENT AS TO ANY PERIOD OF REST** before the second coming; nor is there any passage that can justly be construed to support this view. The only passage on which men have rested (the 20th of Revelation,) may, it is believed, be fully proved to relate to the state of glory after his coming.

2. The New Testament everywhere represents **THE CHURCH** as in **AN AFFLICTED STATE** till our Lord's return. As in persecution, tribulation, suffering, reproach, &c. Matt. v. 10—12; xvi. 24, 25; xix. 29. Luke vi. 21, 22; ix. 23—26; xiv. 25—29; xviii. 1—8; xx. 16—19. John xii. 24—26; xv. 20; xvi. 33. Acts xiv. 22. Rom. v. 3; viii. 17—35; xii. 12—14. 2 Cor. iv. 8—18. Gal. v. 11; vi. 12—16. Phil. i. 28—30. 1 Thess. ii. 14; iii. 4, 5. 2 Thess. i. 4—7. 1 Tim. iii. 12. 1 Peter iv. 12—19. 1 John iii. 12—14. The whole past history of the Church and the [81] experience of faithful Christians accords with the statements made in these passages.

3. The New Testament every where represents **THE WORLD AT LARGE AS ABOUNDING IN WICKEDNESS** during the present dispensation and till it ends. Matt. vi. 32; vii. 13, 14, 21, 22; x. 16—25, 34—36; xi. 25—27; xiii. 24—30, 47; xviii. 7—9; xxiv. 12, 48—51. John iii. 17—20; vii. 7; xv. 18, 19; xvi. 20; xvii. 9, 12—21. Rom. viii. 36. 2 Tim. iii. 13. 1 John v. 19. The actual state of the world is a painful but living commentary on this in the sight of all men.

4. The New Testament every where represents **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS AN ELECT BODY GATHERED OUT OF THE EVIL WORLD**—a chosen generation, a peculiar people, separate and distinct from the world. Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14. Mark xiii. 20. John vi. 37, 45; xiii. 1, 18; xiv. 17—19; xv. 19; xvi. 20; xvii. 9. Acts xv. 14; Rom. viii—xi. Gal. v. 14. Ephes. i. 4—6. Heb. xii. 38. 1 Peter ii. 4—9. 1 John iii. 1; iv. 5, 6.

5. **ONE GLORIOUS HOPE IS SET BEFORE THE CHURCH** in the New Testament. This hope is set before us collectively and in common. It is not to be given separately, at *different* periods, but it is a glory belonging to the Church, to be given to it as a corporate body at a *particular* period, the coming of our Lord; and, while it is to be the one object of hope of all the church in every age, it is to be enjoyed together as one body. For this all are to be looking. Matt. xvi. 27; xxv. Acts xxiv. 15. Rom. v. 2; viii. 1 Cor. i. 7; xv. Gal. v. 5. Phil. iii. 20. Col. i. 23—27. 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 13; v. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Titus ii. 12, 13; iii. 37. Heb. ix. 28. 1 Peter i. 8, 13. 2 Peter iii. 12. 1 John iii. 3.

[82] 6. The coming of the Lord is ever represented as **UNCERTAIN IN THE TIME, BUT NEAR AT HAND**. This does not exclude the possibility of even a long previous period, as in the days of the Apostles,—for the scriptures speak of time with the largeness of the Divine mind; but it does exclude a fore-known certain period of any considerable length: for then we could not be in a state of expectancy for it. Matt. xxiv. 48, 51. Luke xviii. 8; xxi. 35. 1 Thess. v. 1—3. Phil. iv. 5.

Heb. x. 37. James v. 8, 9. 1 Peter iv. 7. 2 Peter iii. 10, 12. Rev. xvi. 15; xxii. 7.

7. In several of the Epistles we observe a statement of **A GROWING FORM OF EVIL**, increasing till the coming of Christ, and not closed till then. The Epistle to *the Romans* depicts the Gentile church as growing in the pride of spiritual privileges and warns them against the danger of being cut off. (ch. xi.) The Epistle to *the Corinthians* depicts the church resting in its external privileges, gendering strife, divisions, and envyings, and warns them of the danger of falling. 1 Cor. x. *Galatians* manifests the leaven of human merit corrupting the gospel. Those to the *Thessalonians* bring out the future apostacy distinctly. The 1st Epistle to *Timothy* shews the corruption of the Papacy; and the 2nd that of lawlessness in the last days. *James* shews us the inroads of worldliness, heaping treasure in the last days. *Peter* and *Jude* gives us the full particulars of the Infidel Apostacy, and one bids us look for the new heavens and the new earth, and the other for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The *Apocalypse* under three distinct streams of prediction, those relating to the seals, [83] trumpets, and the church, with the seven vials, brings before us a series of growing evils, closed by the coming of the Lord.

The whole current then of the New Testament writers flows in one direction—that there is no time of blessedness and peace and general holiness on earth before our Lord's return. Even in their day—though the Lord as to his immediate appearance was not at hand, (ἰσότης) 2 Thess. ii. 2. Yet were Christians to be patiently waiting for him, (2 Thess. iii. 5) and he was in the eye of God *at hand*, or near (κύριος ἐγγύς) Phil. iv. 5. And if this was to be their state of mind much more is it to be ours.

The testimony of the Old Testament respecting the second coming of our Lord has now to be considered. The remarkable feature of the Old Testament is that it is full of predictions of outward rest and glory at the coming of the Lord. But there is this difficulty in interpreting its testimony, that both the first and the second coming being future, we want clear tests to discriminate between these two, that we may rightly apply the passage to its appropriate events. These tests the New Testament furnishes.

(1.) The distinctive features of the first coming are **GRACE** and **SALVATION**, and of the second coming **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **JUDGMENT**. Thus our Lord says, (John xii. 4, 7,) of his first coming, *I came not to judge the world, but to save the world:* but of his second coming we read, he is *ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.* Acts x. 42.

(2.) There are various signs given in the New Testament of **THE SECOND COMING** applying only to that. The sign of the Son of Man in the heavens, [84] the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, the sounding of the trumpet, the restoration of Israel, and the gathering together of his elect: when these signs are mentioned as taking place in connection with predictions in the Old Testament, we may then conclude that it relates to the time of the future Advent. We may observe farther, that the words **THAT DAY**, used absolutely, **POINT OUT** in both Testaments **THE SECOND COMING**. Isa. ii. 11; xxiv. 21; xxvi. 1; xxix. 18; lli. 6. Ezek. xxxviii. 19; xlviii. 35. Joel iii. 18. Zech. xii. 8; xiii. 1; xiv. 4, 9. Mal. iii. 7. Matt. vii. 22; xxiv. 36. Luke x. 12. 1 Thess. v. 4. 2 Tim. i. 12, 18; iv. 8.

The evidence from the Old Testament is so very large that only a few passages can be referred to.

Psalms xciii—xcviii. inclusive, form one connected series of predictions to the same effect, representing a time of blessedness, a happy reign ushered in by judgments. The Lord comes to *judge* and reign over the earth, and the whole creation rejoices in the blessedness which he then brings. The restoration of Israel is predicted, Psalm xcviii. 3.

Psalm cii. clearly predicts mercy to Zion,—the heathen fearing the Lord,—and connects Zion built up, with the Lord appearing in his glory.

ISAIAH chap. ii. connected with Micah iii. 12; iv. 1, shews a future personal coming, in which there are judgments on the nations and a glorious rest for the church. Chap. xi. 4, compared with 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8, shews a time of judgment and then peace following, with the restoration and union of the Jewish tribes. Chap. xviii. gives the restoration of Israel with the sign of the Son of Man and the trumpet, verse 3. Chapters xxiv.—xxvii. are a series of predictions, [85] and a careful comparison of them with parallel expressions in the New Testament, will abundantly prove that these predictions have relation to the second coming. Chap. xxxiv. describes judgments on all the nations coming down upon Idumea (the type of God's enemies, Isa. lxiii. 1—3,) and then in chap. xxxv. we have the following season of blessedness, our God coming *with vengeance and with a recompense*. In chap. xlix. we have (verse 4) a delay intimated in the conversion and restoration of Israel to bring in the Gentiles. The fiftieth chapter shews the first advent and our Lord's rejection, and the fifty-first chapter (ver. 6) the sign of the second, and (ver. 16) the new heavens and new earth, with the preservation of Israel while they are planting. Chap. lix. ver. 20, is applied by the apostle to the

future conversion of the Jews; and this introduces the glories of chap. lx. But it is impossible to enlarge. The sixty-third chap. should be compared with Rev. xiv. 19, 20, and Rev. xix. The sixty-sixth chap. contains the fullest description of the state of the Jews before our Lord's second coming and their being occupied in building a temple in self-righteousness. In verse 5, we have the appearance of the Lord; in verse 15, his coming in fire; and in verse 22, *the new heavens and the new earth*, with the judgments on the transgressors. The voice of Isaiah is uniform that the time of peace and blessedness is at the Lord's coming to punish his enemies and reign over the earth.

JEREMIAH accords with Isaiah. In chapter xxiii. there is first a woe pronounced on unfaithful pastors, and then the righteous branch, the King is to *reign and prosper and execute judgment*—not display grace [86] which he now dispenses, but judgment, and this is connected with a second Exodus greater than the first from the land of Egypt. In chap. xxx. we have the great day of tribulation, ver. 7; the raising up of David their king, ver. 9; and a Governor proceeding out of the midst of them, ver. 21. In chap. xxxi. the resurrection of the infants slain by Herod, ver. 15, the new covenant, ver. 31, and the glory of Jerusalem, ver. 38—40. In chap. xxxiii. we have the restoration of the Jews and the branch of righteousness raised up to execute judgment and righteousness, a Son of David to sit on his throne. (See Rev. iii. 21.)

EZEKIEL bears a like testimony. Among other proofs may be brought chapter xxxiv. where is first the reproofing of the shepherds for scattering Israel, and then the promise—I will judge between cattle and cattle, and set up one Shepherd over them—David—a Prince, and then a state of peace follows. In chapter xxxvii. we have a clear promise of the re-union of the tribes in Israel in such a form as clearly excludes any reference to any of the tribes of Israel being restored with the two tribes from Babylon, and shews a larger return, "Take thee one stick and write upon it for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick and write upon it for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for ALL the house of Israel his companions." There is then a promise of David being their king, and their having one shepherd over them, and of their restoration to their own land; a king according to Deut. xvii. 14—20. This king at his first coming they rejected, when they said we have no king but Cæsar. In the thirty-eighth, thirty-ninth, and following chapters we have [87] the full and final glory of restored Israel, closing with the remarkable title of the city—*The Lord is there*.

The book of DANIEL is very full and explicit. He lived at the time of the rejection of the kingdom of Israel, and was brought into the highest station in connection with the first great empire, to shew its monarch the true God, and teach him his duty towards Him. In chapter ii. we learn that after the division of the fourth universal empire into the ten European kingdoms, the stone smites the image on its feet, and they are broken to pieces, which is interpreted to mean the kingdom of the God of heaven, finally prevailing over all others. In chapter vii. we have a similar prediction, and the Son of man is described as coming in the clouds of heaven; after the destruction of the fourth beast with its ten horns; and then we have the establishment of Christ's universal kingdom over all the earth: the proof here is decisive that the Lord comes before the time of full blessedness on earth.

JOEL, though a short prophecy, contains a striking description of events to take place at the coming of the Lord. Compare Joel ii. 10, 30, with Matt. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 34. Luke xxi. 35, and Rev. vi. 12, 13. In the third chapter we have the gathering of the nations against the restored Jews; the reaping of the harvest of the saints, and the treading down of the vintage of the wicked; the shaking of the heavens (Heb. xii. 27.), and the acknowledging (Matt. xxiii. 39.) of the dwelling of the Lord in Zion, with the emphatic term *that day, the day of the Lord*, in which they are to take place.

In AMOS ix. 8. the sinful kingdom is destroyed, [88] and in *that day* the tabernacle of David is raised up, and the residue of the heathen call on the Lord.*

In OBADIAH 17, the triumph of Israel, and 21, the judgment and kingdom of the saints are predicted.

In MICAH ii. 12, 13, we read of the restoration of Israel, and the breaker, their King and Lord, at the head of them. In chapter iv. verse 8, the first dominion and kingdom, it is predicted, shall return to the daughter of Jerusalem, after the desolation predicted, (iii. 12.) The closing chapter of his prophecies relates to mercies yet to be given to Israel, according to the days when he came out of the land of Egypt, and the utter confusion of opposing nations from the fear of the Lord their God, for whom they had been waiting.

HABAKKUK predicts distinctly the coming of the Lord. In the second chapter, it is said, "The vision is yet for an ap-

* The quotation of this by St. James (Acts xvi. 16, 17,) and his comment upon it, with the variation of expression, shew that it refers to times yet to come at the return of the Lord. *After this I will return, &c.*, that is, after this dispensation of grace to the Gentiles, that *the residue of men* on whom my name *ἐπισκέπεται*, hath been called, might seek after the Lord.

pointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it (or *he*) tarry, wait for it: (or *him*) because it (or *he*) will surely come, it (or *he*) will not tarry:"—a direction applied, Heb. x. 37, to our Lord's coming, and full of practical use to us. In the third chapter we have a sublime description of his coming and punishing the heathen, and saving his people with the signs in the sun and moon. Luke xxi. 25.

ZEPHANIAH bids Israel rejoice, "for the Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; [89] thou shalt not see evil any more." Hardly could there be more explicit statements of our Lord's being personally present with his people in days yet to come!

In **ZECHARIAH**,—the eleventh and following chapters relate to events yet to come, and contain the clear predictions respecting our Lord, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives before Jerusalem—the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee, and the Lord shall be king over all the earth in that day;" and this is followed by days of general blessedness and holiness.

MALACHI appears also in his fourth chapter to refer to judgments yet to come, a discrimination by fire, and the Sun of Righteousness yet to shine, and victories yet to be given to those that fear God's name over the wicked.

Thus the whole current of the Old Testament concurs with the current of the New. The prophets clearly predict a personal coming of our Lord in awful judgments on his enemies, to restore the Jewish state and introduce the universal and glorious kingdom of our Divine Redeemer; the coming to precede the kingdom, and the judgment connected with that kingdom, or as it is stated by St. Paul, "The Lord Jesus shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom."

Oh how important it is, then, that we should be ready for his appearing! what a littleness it puts upon what the world calls great, and with what a magnitude it invests all that God sets before us as our duty with reference to his return, and our acceptance in his sight, and our reward in that day! Now we have the privilege and happiness allowed us of confessing our absent Lord amidst those who deny him, with the [90] cheering assurance that he will confess us before the holy angels in that day when all those things which are now only objects of faith shall be visibly manifested in all their magnitude and unutterable glory.

We have hitherto only considered the period of our Lord's coming with reference to the promised blessedness, and proved that it precedes that blessedness. The nearness of that com-

ing to us personally in this age, is another point of deep moment. Many considerations will be brought forward in the following chapters that may lead us to see that the church has now special reasons to be looking for his coming, and attending to all those directions which lead men to be always ready for its suddenness and surprise.

What a *blessed hope* then is this now before the church! The richest blessing that our God ever gave was the gift of his own Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." But when he first came, though *the world was made by him, the world knew him not, and his own received him not, and he was despised and rejected of men, and cut off out of the land of the living*: and thus, through the unbelief of the Jews, the world lost the greatest blessing which God ever gave to it,—the presence of its true Lord and King. But the God of love has overruled even this. He has taken a people to his name out of the Gentiles; and though now the Gentile churches have in similar unbelief, disregarding his promises, extensively fallen away, yet God's designs for our fallen world are still full of grace and truth; and mercy shall return to Israel, and through them to the Gentiles; and we who now trust in Jesus and confess him, shall yet see our King, the [91] acknowledged Head of all the earth, reigning *King of kings, and Lord of lords*.

And what holy joy should fill his people when they dwell on these glorious prospects! "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo I come and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord; and many nations shall be joined to the Lord, and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee."

Christian reader, have we not too much lost the joyful hope of the earth's fullest glory by refusing to believe so large a testimony as God's word has given to it? and thus have not we and the church at large sunk into similar unbelief with the Jews, and also into the low state of the world, so as hardly to be distinguished from it? Rom. xi. 30—33. Oh let *our affections be set on things above*, looking thence for the Saviour, (Col. iii. 1—4.) and *our conversation be in heaven* cheered with the glorious hope of his return and our then being made like him. Phil. iii. 20, 21. 1 John iii. 3.

The Lord himself fill us with these high and holy hopes, and quicken us and raise us up together, and make us *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!*

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.

[92] Clear views of the principles of interpretation of scripture prophecies are of great advantage towards a well grounded faith in their testimony. A simple, teachable, child-like spirit, and next to this, an acquaintance with the word of God, are indeed most important guides, in this as in every other part of divine truth. The application of the promises in the prophecies to the Christian church has already been pointed out. A few farther remarks are needful to shew that this by no means sets aside the literal interpretation, and may help to clear away part of the doubt, which many feel, from the frequent and confused mention of literal, figurative, symbolical, allegorical, and other modes of interpretation.

All scripture prophecy may be classed under three heads, direct prophecy, parables or visions, and the explanations of these. It is the second class which render distinctions needful to see clearly the warrant for our faith.

In prophetic parables or visions, just as in doctrinal parables, the literal sense only carries us thus [93] far, that the parable was uttered, or the vision seen. The letter is a history,—the prophetic meaning is to be learned by the explanation adjoined, and by comparing scripture with scripture, and thus expounding the symbols with the help of divine wisdom. The last twenty chapters of Ezekiel, Dan. ii. iii. vii. viii. and Zech. i—v. with the Revelation, are of this kind. Among the reasons why it has pleased God to reveal part of his prophecies in this form, these appear the chief. To veil the truths contained from the careless or profane. Matt. viii. 1; xiii. 11—13. Dan. xii. 10. Rev. i. 2. To allure the curiosity and reward the diligence of his servants. Eccles. viii. 1. Prov. i. 5, 6. Rev. i. 1—3. To express more vividly, by symbols, objects of prophecy, which could scarcely be expressed in common language, as empires and dynasties, with their spiritual character and varied forms;—lastly, to lead our thoughts more deep into the events of God's providence, by setting forth the fixed and lasting features of the changes it unfolds, and the analogy of nature with all spiritual truth. But all these imply that to patient, prayerful search, its meaning will be more and more revealed, that certain light is even here attainable,—*The wise shall*

understand; and that the explanations which are mixed with the visions, are for the end of guiding us to the full meaning, and are themselves to be taken in their simple and literal sense. Such are the passages, Rev. i. 7, 11, 17—20; ii. iii. v. 9, 10; vii. 14, 17; ix. 6, 20, 21; xi. 17, 18; xiii. 9, 10; xv. 15; xvii. 1, 7—18; xx. 5, 6; xxi. 3—8.

Setting these apart, prophecy, like all other scripture, is to be literally interpreted. By this it is not meant that figures are excluded; but only that [94] *that* sense is to be affixed, which would first and at once suggest itself to a simple mind, and that figures exist only where the context makes their presence clear, as in passages not prophetic. And this rule springs from the reflection, that God's words were given to be understood. Though, as the messages of Infinite Wisdom, they may contain a further and deeper meaning which the wisest men, and angels themselves (1 Peter i.) can but in part comprehend, they must at least have that meaning which they convey at first to the simplest mind. They would otherwise be more like heathen oracles, than revelations of Divine truth: neither would men be so often charged with the sin of slowness of heart to believe their sayings.

To confirm this, we have only to reflect further that Old Testament prophecies were given to Jews, before the time of the Gentile dispensation. They could not then have understood them but in the letter, that Jerusalem meant Jerusalem the city of David, the chosen seat of God;—Zion, the mount where the temple stood;—Israel, the nation separated from other nations to the name and worship of God. Yet the truth of these promises was to be the anchor of their souls in the midst of trouble, and in times of darkness. Surely then he who marked as iniquity the spoiling of Naboth's vineyard, though with the offer of a better in exchange, would never disappoint the hope of the faithful Jews, though he may graciously add to the promise thus given, a farther and larger blessing. Our Lord warns us expressly against such a view, saying, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets." Matt. v. 17. His reproofs to his disciples, or the pharisees, are never drawn from their [95] belief in their Messiah's kingdom on earth and their nation's glory; but for their disbelief, through carnal pride, of prophecies, alike plain, of the Messiah's sufferings and Israel's desolation.

It has indeed been shewn that the Christian is entitled to apply to himself the promises of spiritual blessings made to the Jews of old. They are to him "all yea and amen in Christ Jesus." But this has led to a great mistake in the interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies—(a mistake in

which the author long partook,) of confining their meaning simply to the Christian church, and not taking their literal application to the Jewish nation, in a fulfilment which, we have so much scriptural reason to expect, will take place hereafter. St. Paul explicitly applies Isa. lix. 20, to a future fulfilment (Rom. xi. 26); Isa. xxv. 8, to the time of the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 54); and Hag. ii. 6, to a future shaking of the heavens and the earth, (Heb. xii. 26); and thereby distinctly teaches us that there will be a future fulfilment of the passages. There are statements in the prophecies that cannot, without the greatest force upon words, be applied merely spiritually, or be viewed as already literally fulfilled, and which we may therefore expect will have a literal accomplishment hereafter.*

The right combination of the literal interpretation of a prophecy, as to its past or future fulfilment, with the present personal application of its promises to the believer's individual use; and the right union of the interpretation of the prediction by historical facts, with its personal use in the way of comfort, example, warning, direction, and hope for the future [96] glory, give us the full advantage of the prophetic word. These things have been too much disjoined.† Having therefore now considered the practical application of the promises to ourselves, we must also notice the literal interpretation of the prophecies as they concern more immediately those of whom they speak.

The privileges and blessings of Christians under the gospel are truly great, and the present enjoyment of spiritual mercies are of incalculable value: "Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus," (Eph. i. 3,) may every Christian say; but *the inheritance* to which we are *predestined* is yet to come. We are now *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is, however, only the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.* Our present privileges still leave us *groaning within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.* (Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 4.)

This may teach us, that any application of the glorious prophecies of the Old Testament to the church now militant, though the Jews are scattered over the earth, and the witnesses

* See Mr. Platt's Thoughts on Old Testament prophecies.

† On the Psalms, Allix, Horsley, and Fry, give us their views of the prophetic meaning. Amesius in Psalmos, Dickson, and Horne, give us their spiritual, practical, and devotional use; but both views are needful to attain the full benefit of the Psalms.

prophecy in sackcloth, must be vastly short of their full meaning; they belong to Christians, indeed, in such foretastes and earnestness as the Divine Spirit may now impart, and in the joyful anticipation of Christian hope; but not in the present possession and enjoyment of the predicted [97] glories. We might here turn Bishop Hall's remark, varying the application; "to tie those frequent and large promises" to a mere spirituality of sense, which Christians have never yet enjoyed, is limiting the Divine promises where we have no right to do it. There may be a much larger literal fulfilment, as well as more extended spiritual blessings in the future state of the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles dwelling on earth, and in the bliss of the glorified saints, dwelling with Christ their Lord in the heavenly Jerusalem. *The scriptures cannot be broken*, (John x. 35,) should be to us an axiom in their interpretation. "Heaven and earth shalt pass, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (Matt. v. 11; xxiv. 35.) However we may, for illustration, accommodate them to the Christian church, their real meaning as prophecies has not, as far as we can judge, had an adequate fulfilment in events that have yet taken place, and therefore we may consider that they are to be realized in a more blessed state than this world has ever yet witnessed.

Let not any imagine that the glow of eastern imagery, and poetic imagination, led the prophets to give what may to us appear exaggerated views of the state of the church of Christ. It is not really so. The Parables of our Lord, and the predictions of the book of Revelation, shewing us the trials of the church and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, may guard us against such a perversion: and the closing chapters of that book, may lead us to a fuller view of the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is also a most unworthy idea of the words of the Divine Spirit, to think that they are [98] swelled out beyond the just meaning; *God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think*, (Eph. iii. 20;) and it is perfectly clear that the promises to the patriarchs were not realized to them individually, and yet wait for their full accomplishment. (Acts viii. 4, 5. Heb. x. 8—16, 39, 40.)

It is necessary to a consistent interpretation, and it throws great light on the Old Testament predictions, and on the future purposes of God, to take them first, and generally, in their plain, literal, and obvious meaning:—Zion meaning Zion—Judah meaning Judah—Israel meaning Israel—and Jerusalem meaning Jerusalem. Mark how far they were accomplished when Christ first came, (as in Isaiah liii.; Dan. ix. 25, 26,) and then consider what has yet been unaccomplished, and may be

realized in the future restoration of the Jews. Let us interpret the unfulfilled on the same principle, and in the same literal way as we do the fulfilled.

May we not (the author must include himself,) have perverted the scriptures; have wronged the Jews, have obscured the future glorious kingdom of Christ; have misdirected the church, and hidden from it the judgments yet to come on the ungodly, by attempting to spiritualize that which God intended not to be spiritualized, but to be literally understood?

It is allowed that there is much figurative and symbolical language in the scriptures, and especially in the prophetic writings. Some prophecies are plain and literal, and others symbolical; it should be considered, therefore, whether the prophecies be symbolical, such as are Daniel ii. and vii. and much of the book of Revelation; or simple and literal as [99] many prophecies in Isaiah. Figurative language in the symbolical prophecies is frequently "taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic."* The rules which Sir Isaac Newton gives, and the examples of Daubuz, on the prophetic language, are valuable; though probably no rules of interpretation yet fixed on this point are altogether unexceptionable. Much scriptural and heavenly wisdom is requisite for fully understanding the right interpretation of the language of the varied prophecies. Dan. xii. 4, 8—10.

A difference between a symbol and a figure may be noticed. All language is full of figures which convey the meaning quite as accurately as plain expressions, and much more forcibly. A symbol is an emblematic or allegorical sign; a purposely designed picture, using things universally known to convey knowledge to our minds; and thus concealing and yet illustrating; hiding from the careless, and yet speaking more explicitly than words, which have a variable meaning, and could not be so exactly translated, to the diligent searcher of scripture. The meaning of symbols is, however, made yet clearer by literal explanations. Thus we are informed that *Candlesticks* mean *Churches*, Rev. i. 20. *The woman* means *the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*, (Rev. xvii. 18,) the *Dragon and Old Serpent* means *the Devil and Satan*. Rev. xx. 2.

The distinction between symbolical and literal prophecies may be distinctly seen in those of DANIEL. The first part of the prophecies, chap. ii. from 31—35, is symbolical: then comes the literal explanation, verse 36—45. The first part of ch. vii. verse 1—14, [100] is chiefly symbolical, the latter part, (verse 15—27,) is the literal explanation. The eleventh

* See Sir I. Newton on Daniel chap. ii.

chapter is literal prophecy, called *the scripture of truth*, (Dan. x. 2,) *the truth*, (Dan xi. 21,) in opposition to figure and symbol. From the latter part of this remarkable prophecy, many expect a future developement of ANTICHRIST. Mr. Faber considers that the Antichrist predicted by St. John, is the same enemy as the wilful king in Daniel, (chap. xi.) and he views the actions of Antichrist as mainly constituting the third woe, (Rev. xi.) the fulfilment of which he considers as commencing with the French Revolution. The Author cannot see that the latter part of Daniel xi. refers only to that which is supposed to be emphatically and exclusively the Antichrist. Many particulars have had a remarkable fulfilment already in the history of Antiochus, of the Saracens, and of the Turks, as developed by Brightman, in his Exposition of Daniel xi., Mede, Newton, Keith, &c.; the prophecy is not, however, yet fully accomplished, and when that which remains unfulfilled is accomplished, it doubtless will make the whole clear. The change in the description of the beast, (Rev. xvii. compared with Rev. xiii.) leads us to expect that change in the Roman empire before its destruction, which will more remarkably manifest the workings of every Antichrist previous to the final overthrow of Christ's enemies. The third woe appears to be the day of judgment. Rev. xi. 13.

The symbolical character of much of the chief book of prophecies in the New Testament, THE REVELATION, is obvious. It is full also of literal and plain expressions. The application of expressions, originally adapted to the Jewish Dispensation [101] throughout the apostolic writings, to the use of the Christian church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, and their enlarged meaning, in this use, has been sufficiently explained and justified.* The Revelation has many Jewish ideas, characters and expressions, but they are applicable to the Gentile Christian churches, and fulfilled in their history. The term *Babylon* is so explained in the Book, and, by the course of events, that it cannot be applied to the literal Babylon; nor the term *Jerusalem*, merely to the literal Jerusalem; nor the term *Jew* to the literal Jew only, (Rev. ii. 9; Rom. ii. 28, 29); nor the *Lamb slain*, to the literal lamb sacrificed in the temple, (Rev. v. 6); nor the *golden vials* full of odours, (Rev. v. 8,) to the incense offered in the temple. This consideration is decisive in the Author's mind, to shew that events of the Christian church fulfil the Apocalypse, and that we need not, and ought not, because no literal fulfilment has yet taken place, to imagine that these may not have been a fulfilment of the symbols,

* See Mendham's *Clavis Apostolica* for many useful remarks on the New Testament application of Old Testament language.

after the manner in which Protestants generally concur, though they may not yet clearly see or fully agree in particular application. It is generally admitted that the Jews are included in the later triumphs of the church foretold in this book: but it would be here a false literalness to apply words taken from the Jewish dispensation, merely literally, or exclusively to the Jews.*

It strengthens these considerations when we remember [102] that the four beasts of Daniel, (chapter vii.) refer to the four universal kingdoms of the earth; and it is generally admitted both by Protestants and Romanists, that the fourth beast of Daniel is the same as the beast described by St. John, and that both point out the Roman empire. Cressener shews this at length in fourteen different particulars, and concludes, "it is therefore unquestionable, that the fourth beast in Daniel is the same with the beast in the Revelations." He brings extracts from the Romanists, Viega, Alcassar, Malvenda, and Ribera, as concurring in this view.† The learned Romanist, Sylviera, identifies too the beast of Revelation with that of Daniel, and brings forward many Romanists and Fathers to support this interpretation.‡

Mede thus states his view: "I conceive Daniel to be a contracted Apocalypse, and the Apocalypse Daniel explicate, in that where both treat about the same subject, namely, what was revealed to Daniel concerning the fourth kingdom, but summarily and in gross, was shewed to John particularly, with the distinction and order of the several fates and circumstances which were to betide and accompany the same. And that therefore Daniel's prophecy is not terminated with the first, but reacheth to the second coming of Christ, as appears by that description of the glorious coming, and of the great judgment, (Dan. vii.) and his prophecy of the resurrection. (chap. xii.) This has been the constant tradition of the church, from the apostles' days to this last age, and was of the church of the Jews before, and at our Saviour's time. And if the apostles had ever [103] taught the church otherwise, it could never have been so fully forgotten."§

Sir Isaac Newton also says—"the Apocalypse of St. John is written in the same style as the prophecies of Daniel, and has the same relation to them which they have one to another; so

* In this view the radical defect of Brown's "The Jew, the Master-Key of the Revelation," applying it mainly to the Jews, and of Mr. Burgh's "Revelation Unfulfilled," may be seen. See the Review of Mr. Burgh's book in the Dublin Christian Herald, vol. iii. p. 270.

† See Cressener's Demonstration, p. 82—89; See also p. 8, 9.

‡ See his work on the Apocalypse, vol. ii. p. 121, &c.

§ See his Works, page 787.

that all of them together make one complete prophecy, and an interpretation thereof. The prophecy is distinguished into seven successive parts by the opening of the seven seals of the Book which Daniel was commanded to seal up, (Daniel xii. 4, 9.) and hence it is called the Apocalypse or Revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

But during that fourth empire, the Jews, though there be a *remnant*, are, as a *people, fallen, and diminished, cast away, and broken off*, (Rom. xi. 11—18.) that the Gentiles might be *grafted in, reconciled, enriched and saved; a people being taken out of them for the name of God, at the Saviour's return he will build again the tabernacle of David*, but not till then. Acts xv. 14—16.

The predictions of Daniel (chap. ii. and vii.) and of St. John, relate to the times of the Gentiles. St. John takes up that part of Daniel's predictions, which was left unaccomplished, and gives a more minute and full detail,† for the use of those who were *God's servants* in general, and assuring them *the things would shortly come to pass*. To apply, then, the prophecies of Revelation primarily, mainly, and almost exclusively to the Jews, is to carry literal interpretation too far, and to go on a fundamentally erroneous [104] principle. To consider also, as some have done, the Revelation as wholly unfulfilled, is to suppose nothing taking place of things which were said shortly to come to pass, and to leave the servants of God, for 1800 years, without the light of particular prophecy. The painful fact of many differences, or mistakes, of interpreters, will not remove an improbability which must be considered great. Let us remember, also, the explicit statements of the value of prophecy, as a light to the church; (Amos iii. 7. John xv. 15. 2 Peter i. 19.) and the large concurrence of laborious, patient, and deeply learned, and pious Protestants; and the important fact that one grand instrument of effecting the blessed Reformation, was the uniform testimony of the Reformers, adopted by the Protestant church every where, that Popery was the Man of Sin, and Papal Rome the Babylon of Revelation. But for this interpretation of prophecy, we might still have been in the darkness and infatuation of that awful perversion of the gospel.

The importance of chronological prophecy to aid us now in preparedness for the day of Christ, is great, and the general interpretation has been the chief means of strengthening and confirming, if not of exciting attention to this. An wholly unfulfilled Revelation leaves us without any guide on this most important point.

* See Newton's Observations, p. 254.

† See Mr. Habershon's Work for the illustration of this, p. 6, 7.

A vast variety of puzzling as well as important questions may be asked; and very many difficulties presented quite overwhelming at first sight. Bishop Newton says, "folly" (I would rather say ingenuity) "may ask more questions than wisdom can answer." This is the case with every subject. Even with those prophecies that have been obviously, and in a large [105] part fulfilled, there are sentences which have not apparently been realized, and which we therefore conclude, yet wait for their fulfilment, or for farther light respecting them. Difficulties do not overturn a system of interpretation; the human intellect is strong to pull down, but weak to see God's will, and the fulfilling of his purposes, and to build up his truth. This is not stated as an objection to the pointing out of difficulties, but as a reason why, though there are real difficulties, and we cannot see the whole of the case, we should not on that account disregard and set aside a system of interpretation which in many of the most important particulars, meets the terms of the prophecy, and allows subsequent events that may complete the whole. The course of investigation may, and the course of time will, assuredly, clear up all the difficulties of God's word; and *we shall know as we are known.* - 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Nor can we expect perfectly to comprehend any part of divine truth, till *that which is perfect is come*, verse 10.

It may serve very much to weaken the force of these objections, to look at similar difficulties in prophecies which our Lord and his apostles notice as fulfilling in their day, and the obscurities attaching to them. Compare for instance the references in Matthew with the Old Testament Prophecies, and see whether there be not scope for an able mind to make difficulties. Far also, is universal consent from being a necessary test of truth. Some of the Jews, enlightened by prophecy, (Luke ii. 25, 38.) cordially received Christ; but the great body of the Jewish nation rejected our divine Lord, (Acts xiii. 27.) because they shut their eyes to predictions which had [106] real difficulties, but still light enough to guide them, and which we are assured were actually fulfilled. May those, then, who are staggered at the varieties of opinion, and the difficulties in the Protestant interpretation of the Revelation, duly weigh this! The Jews still reject even the most plainly fulfilled prophecies of Christ; and even the most attached disciples of our Lord were long in understanding the prophecies that were fulfilling before their eyes. (Luke xxiv. 21.) A prophecy may be fulfilled, though professing and even real servants of Christ differ about it, and do not think that it has been accomplished. If we wait till all are agreed, before we are influenced by pro-

phetic truth, we must wait till the day of grace be passed, and Christ be come in his glory.

It appears to the author that most of the materials of a true interpretation of the Apocalypse have been gathered together by those who have trodden in the steps of Mede; but he feels doubtful whether these materials have yet (valuable as the writings of Vitringa, Cressener, Newton, Woodhouse, Faber, Cuninghame, &c. are,) been so selected and classified, as to furnish that which will be found to be exactly true in the end. But let none wait for farther light before they are influenced by them to preparation for our Lord's coming. Whether it may please the Lord, or not, to give to any of his servants before his coming, the true interpretation of the whole, who can tell? More understanding, however, in the last days, is expressly promised to the wise, (Dan. xii. 10;) and enough is clear to answer one great end of prophecy, and to impress upon the whole church the solemn duty of diligent preparation for, [107] and lively expectation of the day of Christ. When that glorious Being who alone *was found worthy* in heaven and earth, *to take the book and open the seals thereof*, (see Rev. v.) returns again, he will unfold what are now difficulties in the full accomplishment of predictions, and realize his own promise; *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* John xiii. 7. As the Revelation was given by him to be a present light to the church militant in a dark world: so its accomplishment may be opened by him to display his full glory to the church triumphant in the heavenly kingdom.

The tendency of the new view of an Apocalypse wholly unfulfilled, is to throw men off from a state of watchfulness and readiness for our Lord's coming. If once men can be brought to think the great book of prophecy of our Lord's coming to be yet unaccomplished, a vast variety of events have then previously to take place without any preceding clue as to the time. It has the same effect as a spiritual coming before the Millennium, making it more difficult to realize the coming *as a thief* and *as a snare*, to us at the present time; and so impracticable, to be always in a watching and waiting spirit for that blessed, though most tremendous day.

The remarkable PROPHECY OF OUR LORD, (recorded Matt. xxiv. and xxv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi.) is almost wholly literal.* That this prediction cannot throughout be intended to point the destruction of Jerusalem, (as Bishop Newton and many others have imagined,) though generally also considering it [108] typical of Christ's second coming, Bishop Horsley

* See Myers' "Prophecies delivered by Christ himself," for some valuable thoughts in illustration of this prophecy.

has sufficiently shewn in his sermons upon it. That the expression "*this generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled,*" need not be limited to the then existing generation, has been proved in various ways.* If γενεα were rendered *nation*, the expression would be parallel to Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. It may describe simply an evil and adulterous generation, as Matt. xii. 39. [109] Psalm xxii. 30, giving a deep lesson that the infidel and self-righteous generation should not pass away till all those solemn judgments had taken place. Our Lord, however, apparently here uses γενεα as a note of time; but he distinguishes between *these things*, and *that day*, and the interval is called by St. Luke, *the times of the Gentiles*. These things, as far as related to the destruction of Jerusalem, were fulfilled in that generation; for his coming we wait the close of the times of the Gentiles, upon the continuance of which we have light in other prophecies. The order of expressions in St. Luke, shews us that the signs in the sun shall be after *Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles*, and at the close of the times of the Gentiles. Luke xxi. 24, 25. St. Luke leads us thus to see that St. Matthew's, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*, refers to the expiration of the times of the Gentiles, and the tribulation to an extended

* See Mede, p. 752; Hersley's Sermons, Investigator, vol. i. 53, 376; Cuninghame, p. 312. The remarks of Maldonatus, an able Romanist, upon it are curious, and to this effect: "The more recent interpreters of the heretics, (i. e. Protestants,) and even of some Catholics who are wont to follow them too much, expound this "age" as if the sense were, before that age of men who then lived, had passed away, Jerusalem would be destroyed. There were also formerly, most ancient authors who so explained it, but Origen calls them simple men; and truly this will not appear to be the sense when we oppose to it another better sense. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, &c. interpret it a generation of faithful men, as if Christ said, although so many and such great calamities should come, yet the church should not perish till the end of the world; but Jerome understands the generation of all men, as if our Lord said, —before the human race passed away, all the things which he had predicted would happen. To me in this place, all the world seems to be called generation, as the whole begotten—as elsewhere the creature is called because it is all the created; therefore the true sense appears to be, that so certain were the things which Christ predicted, that the world should not perish before they happened. This is manifestly to be collected from the following sentence, *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, &c.; therefore they who translate age for 'generation,' do injury to the sentence." The opinions of Chrysostom, Theophylact, &c. are calculated to shew how little Greek writers felt that the original Greek word confined the meaning to a living generation. See a sensible letter in the British Magazine, vol. xiv. p. 790, shewing that the word γενεα is not always used in its chronological signification: see Luke xvi. 8. It may mean (Matt. xxiii. 36; Mark viii. 38; Luke xi. 31) a class or kind of persons of which the persons then existing were the living representatives, but which included their fathers (Matt. xxiii. 32.) equally with themselves, and of which the discriminating feature was, not contemporaneousness of existence, but community of character. Psalm xxii. 30; cii. 18; xii. 7. The idea in our Lord's mind would thus be, this generation are the men of this world, as distinguished from the γενεα η αρχομενη of the new heavens and new earth. They are the Jew after the flesh, in contradistinction to the Jew after the Spirit.

period, shortened as to their severity, (mutilated *κολοβωο*) with a paroxysm at its beginning, (Matthew xxiv. 21, 22,) and at its close. (Matt. xxiv. 29; Dan. xii. 1.) The expressions in Luke xxi. 25, 26, the "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth,—distress of nations, (*ἔθνη*, Gentiles) with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, (*οἰκουμένη*)," are larger than to be limited to the land of Judea. The *lifting up of the head*, (Luke xxi. 28) is inconsistent with the state of Jews or Christians, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

There appears a mixture of figurative and literal expressions in Luke xxi. 25, 26, but there may be peculiar commotions in the sea to fulfil literally that part [110] which seems most figurative, and also a literal fulfilment of signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars. Yet we would not be positive that these parts of this truly magnificent prophecy, reaching from the first to the second coming, bearing as they do the appearance of a mixture of literal and of symbolical expressions, are only to be literally realized, lest we be waiting for tokens of our Saviour's coming, which may not be really promised.

The whole discourse seems to have three leading parts—1st. The preparation for the desolation of Jerusalem, Matt. xxiv. 4—14; Mark xiii. 4—13; Luke xxi. 8—19. 2nd. The time of war and the lengthened desolation, Matt. xxiv. 15—21; Mark xiii. 14—19; Luke xxi. 20—24. 3d. The events of the time of the end, including the coming of Christ, Matt. xxiv. 22—31; Mark xiii. 20—27; Luke xxi. 25—28. The things relating to the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled before that generation passed away. Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32. These were both a type of, and a step onward to the coming of Christ. Of that event the day was unrevealed. Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32; Luke xxi. 34, 35. There is an analogy between the Jewish tribulation at the destruction of Jerusalem and the Gentile tribulation at the coming of Christ. St. Luke, written later, and more directly for the Gentile churches, furnishes a key for the interpretation of parts of this discourse.

This wonderful prophécý sets before us with the plainness of history the destruction of Jerusalem, its lengthened desolation, and the prolonged tribulation of the Jews; the false teachers that should arise in the Christian church; the revolutions preceding [111] the coming of Christ, his sudden coming, the mourning of all the tribes of the earth, and the gathering together of his people, and practically improves the solemn subject by many PRACTICAL LESSONS: by the warning

example of the deluge to the wicked; and by four parables, the first three relating to his professing church—the servants expecting their Lord's return, the ten virgins and the talents; and the last, the sheep and goats, relating apparently to the judgment of all the nations of the earth.*

The lessons which it speaks to us, after the revolutions which we have been witnessing in the last forty years, (which probably have commenced fulfilling, Luke xxi. 25, 26,)† are peculiarly impressive. **THEY ARE THE LESSONS FOR THIS GENERATION.** May our God lead his ministers and people every where diligently to study these lessons!‡

[112] But we return to the more direct consideration of literal interpretation. In a remarkable part of this prophecy, there is an express declaration, "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27; Matt. xxiv. 30. To suppose that this is a spiritual coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, appears to me contrary to Matthew xxiii. 39; Luke xxi. 28; and the regular course of the whole prophecy continued in Matt. xxiv. and xxv. The term coming in the clouds is in other passages viewed by most interpreters as a personal coming, (Daniel vii. 13; Acts i. 9—11; 1 Thess. iv. 17; Rev. i. 7,) and to give it here a spiritual instead of a literal interpretation, would be to my mind, (the author speaks for himself,) a wresting of the scriptures wholly unjustifiable. The angels addressing the apostles seem to have specially guarded us against this (in Acts i. 11,) by the strength of the expression, *shall so come in like manner*, οὕτως ἐλεύσεται ὡν τρόπον. This also meets that class of objections which considers the coming of Christ

* A farther explanation will be given of these in the chapter on the Millennium.

† The Revolution of France seemed to terminate when Bonaparte was dethroned, and peace was established; yet the events of the twenty-five years since have abundantly proved, that though there was an interval in the shocks of the earthquake, there has been nothing to lead us to conclude that the judgments on papal countries have ceased. Look at the troubled course of Europe since that time. It is striking, that Charles the Tenth of France was compelled to resign his throne in the castle of Rombouillet, the lawful inheritance of a Protestant family, whom his ancestors had driven from their home, as if to mark more the hand of God. And what has been, and is still the state of the European kingdoms; but *distress of nations with perplexity*? Yet with all the outward evidence of peace, *they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all—so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.* Let the Christian discern the signs of the times!

‡ See the interpretation of this remarkable prophecy, given in Abdiel's Essays, page 121—201; and see Sirr's answer to Mr. Gipps, p. 89—113, on the two last Parables. Mr. Begg's letter on the subject answers many of the arguments by which the common system of interpretation has been defended.

to be only a spiritual coming to establish his spiritual kingdom.*

[113] A mixture in the same passage of figurative and literal expression is not uncommon. We see this, Isa. xlv. 3—5; where we have first the figure, and then the explanation, and then again an enlargement of the figure, and an enlarged explanation. Almost all figures difficult of comprehension are literally explained in the scriptures, and often in the same passage where the figure occurs. See John vii. 38, 39; many instances of such explanation occur in the book of Revelation.

* Archbishop Newcome, Daubuz, and Bishop Newton, all held the idea of a literal first resurrection, and personal coming of Christ before the Millennium. As Newcome's Translation of the New Testament is scarce, one or two Extracts are subjoined from his notes. He says, on Matt. xxiv. 39. "This may be fulfilled at the future restoration of the Jews, see Luke i. 32, 33." On Matt. xxii. 34, "I think that our Lord's words do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to his future state of glory."

On Luke i. 32, 33. "Compare Isaiah ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14. The spiritual kingdom of the Messiah will be everlasting, and when the Jews as a people shall believe in him, and be restored to their own country, there will be a magnificent display of his royalty. See Ezek. xxxvii. 24."

On Rev. xx. 4. "*The souls of those, that is those. And they lived again.* I understand this not figuratively, of a peaceable and flourishing state of the Church on earth, but literally of a real resurrection, and of a real reign with Christ, who will display his royal glory in the New Jerusalem. "This is the great Sabbatism, or rest of the Church." Barnabus, in Daubuz. *Lived not again.* Mede, Daubuz, and others, argue, that as a real resurrection is meant here, a figurative cannot be meant in the foregoing verse."

The sentiments of BISHOP NEWTON are so well known, and his book so common, that it is needless to quote from him.

DAUBUZ, in his work on Revelation, chap. xix. 11. "This is Christ himself, who rides upon his white horse; as appears by what is said hereafter. He is to act therein himself visibly, without deputies, at least such as he has already employed . . . Christ comes now to settle himself in his kingdom, with his saints, who are now to be gathered to him."

On Rev. xx. 4, he is equally express as to the literal resurrection, and gives these reasons why the persons of the martyrs are denominated souls: "The first is, that $\psi\chi$ is said of a dead man upon the account of the shedding of his blood, which is as his soul; the second is that $\psi\chi$ signifies *a dead body*, (he here refers to passages in the Septuagint and Targum, and to Schindler in proof of this); and in this sense one may also understand that place of Rev. vi. 9. Now these souls thus shed or dead, are to live and reign. It being therefore certain that these very souls are they which must be understood thus dead and living, and that it is not possible to understand it of any other sort of men but of the primitive martyrs—it is now as certain that in this Millennial state they revive again, and reign with Christ. This I am sure of, that these words can only be understood of such as have been slain, not of any other sort of men, and so cannot denote any collective body of men, in a mortal state. The whole tenor of the prophecy leads us to understand this of a proper resurrection of the dead martyrs. Is it not, therefore, a sad thing, that some divines should presume so much upon the penetration of their wits as to pretend, from the single consideration of this place, without having any other knowledge of the economy of this prophecy, to determine negatively, and against such a proper resurrection."

LANCASTER abridges Daubuz, and follows him in his views. I am disposed to think that the prevailing views of those who have diligently studied and written upon the prophecies, are those of pre-millennial, personal advent, and first literal resurrection.

If figurative language be interpreted not fancifully, but agreeably to the scriptures, there will be few cases where humble and prayerful Christians will differ. Hooker's rule is here of great value, "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions [114] of sacred scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art which changes the meaning of words as Alchymes does or would do the substance of metals, makes of any thing what it lists, and brings in the end all truth to nothing."

The extracts from varied authors in the note in a former page (especially those from Bishop Hall) will shew to what great lengths able and good men have gone in that spiritualizing system, which, especially where it is exclusive, has been far from a harmless perversion of the words of the Holy Spirit.

Every passage of God's word should be interpreted literally where the predictions can be literally fulfilled, unless there be a necessity from the subject or the context, to the contrary, or an absurdity by doing so, or a scriptural authority to justify another interpretation. Dr. John Smith justly remarks, "Although the prophets use words so frequently in a figurative or metaphorical sense, yet we ought not without necessity to depart from the primitive and original sense of the language." We must not forsake the proper meaning, without an evident reason and necessity. David Levi justly [115] reproaches Christians, "Can any thing be more absurd than to explain the prophecies which foretell the calamity which is to befall the Jews in a literal sense, and those which speak of their future felicity in a spiritual and mystical sense!" In the literal interpretation, however, there is a peculiar need of exercising that waiting spirit, which is the characteristic posture of a believer's mind in the interpretation of prophecy. Hab. ii. 1—4.

Vitringa gives this important rule—"We must never depart from the literal meaning of the subject mentioned, in its own appropriate name, if all or its principal attributes square with the subject of the prophecy." A farther rule of Vitringa's may assist us where a literal interpretation will not stand: "If the attributes by no means agree with the subject expressed by its own name, we must think of another parallel or corresponding subject, which is mystically called by this name, on account of the agreement between the type and antitype. There are instances in the case of *Elias*, Mal. iv. 5; *David*, Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24: *Solomon*, Psa. lxxii. 1; *Edom*, Isaiah lxiii. 1."

Gausenus (quoted by Vitringa) thus illustrates the subject:

“The whole of the Old Testament, with the exception of a few places, has a meaning sufficiently suited for those times, and some way or other adapted to the circumstances of the Israelites; but the unalterable wisdom of God shewed itself in this, that he superinduced upon it a more exalted meaning; and while the apostles open this out by the secret skill of the Holy Spirit, we are struck with astonishment at such great things, and praise our heavenly Father, who has revealed to his children [116] those things which he has hidden from the wise and prudent.”

There are but few predictions of scriptures that have received their full accomplishment. Even those relating to nations connected with the Jews have not in all their parts been fulfilled. A list might be drawn out of particulars unfulfilled, as well as of those which have been fulfilled respecting Babylon, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and other countries. When God foretells things, he takes that large view which comprehends the whole of his dispensation, and frequently passes rapidly from a commencing to a completing accomplishment. We shall thus find the first and second coming of Christ so intermingled, that only the result can shew us the fulfilment of the whole. The name Babylon given to the Roman church seems to intimate that there may be a farther fulfilment in it of those predictions in the Old Testament which were first pronounced against Babylon of old.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING THE JEWS.

[117] Many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as far as they regard the Jews, have already been **LITERALLY ACCOMPLISHED**. Let us, when we have to consider a prophecy, first inquire after this point, and endeavour to ascertain whether it may not have received a literal accomplishment. The value of such a prophecy still remains. It marks the constant and particular foreknowledge and providence of God, illustrates his dealings with his creatures, and furnishes a most solid evidence of the divine inspiration of the holy scriptures. The actual accomplishment must, therefore, never be overlooked, especially that which regards the first coming of our Saviour in the flesh among the Jews, and the diffusion of his gospel among the nations of the earth, through the labours of apostles

selected from the Jewish church. The first advent of Christ was the greatest event which this lower world has hitherto witnessed, and the confirmation of it affects the faith and happiness of the whole human race: and no wonder, therefore, that it is so much dwelt upon, both in prophecy and in the history of the New Testament, [118] where the fact is confirmed, and the truth and inspiration of the prophecies are established.

In order rightly to interpret other prophecies, we must notice the *time* when they were delivered. There are, generally, express statements, in connection with every particular prophecy, which discover this important circumstance. All the prophets of the Old Testament, except the last three, flourished before the return from the captivity in Babylon. Zechariah and Haggai also prophesied at the time of the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel, and seventy years before the return of a large body under Ezra. It appears, from various expressions, that some of the ten tribes also returned at the same time. Ezra vi. 17—21; viii. 35. The prophecies, therefore, foretelling their return to their own land, received a commencing, though only partial, accomplishment in their return from captivity, yet by no means adequate to the fulness and largeness of varied predictions. Indeed Ezekiel xxxvii. 16, and Hosea i. 6—10, point out the difference between Israel and Judah, and include God's dealings with both.

It is evident that a variety of events may fulfil in a regular series the same prophecy. The first promise of Christ, (Gen. iii. 15.) and the prophecies respecting Noah's sons, shew this. Hence many events in successive ages may be but as parts of one full sense in which a prophecy shall ultimately be fulfilled. Hereby the divine foreknowledge, and the inspiration of the holy scriptures, are in the result most remarkably displayed and illustrated. Thus there may be a growing accomplishment of prophecy through many ages.*

[119] Many prophecies respecting the land of Judea have received already a remarkable and literal fulfilment; as Mr.

* Lord Bacon's statement on this subject is in the usual style of that great man, who takes original and comprehensive views of all that he considers. It occurs in the first section of his Work, "De Augmentis Scientiarum," and is as follows:—"The history of prophecy consists of two relatives; the prophecy, and the accomplishment: whence the nature of it requires that every scripture prophecy be compared with the event, through all the ages of the world, for the better confirmation of the faith, and the better information of the church, with regard to the interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled. But here we must allow the latitude which is peculiar and familiar to divine prophecies; which have their completion not only at stated times, but in succession, as participating of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a growing accomplishment through many ages, though the height of fulness of them may refer to a single age or moment.

Keith has ably shewn in the fifth chapter of his work on prophecy: others remain unaccomplished.

But let us confine our attention more particularly to the expectations which we may justly entertain respecting **THE FUTURE STATE OF THE JEWS.**

There are many expressions in the Old Testament which may lead us to expect not only the conversion of the Jews, but their **NATIONAL RESTORATION FROM THEIR PRESENT DISPERSION** to their own land. The late Mr. Scott thus summed up his own views on the subject, in his work on the Restoration of Israel. He says:—

“It is now becoming more and more the opinion of serious Christians, that when Israel shall be converted to their long-rejected Messiah, they will be gathered from their dispersions, and reinstated in their own land; which being rendered as fertile as in times past, (perhaps much more so,) and extended to the utmost limits of the grants made to the Patriarch, will yield them in rich abundance, all things [120] needful and comfortable for this present life. It is also thought that they will live in this land under rulers of their own nation as the vicegerents of the Messiah, of David, or the Son of David, in entire peace and security, free from invader or oppressor, and from the fear of any: and that, along with all spiritual blessings in rich abundance, they will be voluntarily regarded by all other nations, then truly converted, with peculiar love, and gratitude, and honour, as the source of all their spiritual blessings, and especially as most nearly related to their common Messiah and Saviour, who is the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.”*

* The author has given a full reference to all the prophecies on the conversion and restoration of the Jews, in his Occasional Works, p. 134—140. A collection of promises concerning the calling of the Jews and the glory which shall be in the latter days: taken from Powell's Concordance, published in 1673. It is referred to by Doddridge in his Lectures on Divinity, and is as follows:—

“I. The Jews shall be gathered from all parts of the earth where they are now scattered, and brought into their own land.

For this see Isaiah xi. 11; xxvii. 12, 13; xliii. 5, 6; xlix. 11, 12; lx. 4. Compare Jer. iii. 18; xvi. 14, 15; xxiii. 3; xxx. 10; xxxi. 7, 8, 10; xxxii. 37. So Hos. xi. 10, 11; Zeph. iii. 10; Zech. viii. 7, 8; x. 8, 9, 10.

“II. They shall be carried by the Gentiles to their place; who shall join themselves with the Jews, and become the Lord's people.

Isaiah xlix. 22; xiv. 2; lx. 9; lxvi. 18, 20; and ii. 2, 3, 4. Compare Jer. iii. 17; xvi. 19; Ez. xlvii. 22, 23; Mic. v. 3; Zec. ii. 11; viii. 20 to 23.

“III. Great miracles shall be wrought when Israel is restored as formerly, when they were brought out of Egypt—viz.

1. Drying up the river Euphrates. Isa. xi. 15, 16; Zec. x. 11; Rev. xvi. 12; Hos. xi. 15; Mic. vii. 15.

2. Causing rivers to flow in desert places. Isaiah xii. 17, 18, 19; xlviii. 20, 21; xliii. 19, 20.

3. Giving them prophets. Isa. lxvi. 18, 19, 20, 21; Hos. xii. 9, 10.

[121] It may be useful to remember, when we are forming an opinion respecting minute particulars of unfulfilled prophecy, that the utmost caution, forbearance [122] and reverence become us, lest we intrude upon the glories and peculiar attributes of Jehovah, and go a step beyond what he has authorized or revealed. For instance, any interpretations which would refer the main promises concerning the Jews either to any state of mere worldly, or of mere spiritual glory and splendour, may fall far short of the event, just as their expectations respecting an immediate temporal kingdom of the Messiah were disappointed by that spiritual kingdom, which he established, and which is *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Rom. xiv. 17.

It appears, however, from a careful consideration of the

4. *The Lord Christ* himself shall appear at the head of them. Isa. xxxv. 4; lii. 12; lviii. 8; Hos. i. 10, 11; Mic. ii. 12, 13.

"IV. The Jews, being restored and converted to the faith of Christ, shall be formed into a state, and have judges and counsellors over them as formerly: *the Lord Christ* himself being their King, who shall then also be acknowledged King over all the earth.

Isa. i. 26; lx. 17. Compare Jer. xxiii. 4; xxx. 8, 9, 21; Hos. iii. 5; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; xxxvii. 24, 25; Isaiah liv. 5; Obad. 21; Zec. xiv. 5, 9; Psalm xxii. 27, 28.

"V. They shall have the victory over all their enemies, and all kings and nations of the earth shall submit unto them.

For which see Isaiah xi. 13, 14; xiv. 1, 2; xli. 14, 15, 16; xlix. 23; lx. 12; xxv. 10, 11, 12; Joel iii. 7, 8, 19, 20; Obad. 17, 18; Micah iv. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13; v. 5, 6, 7; vii. 16, 17; Zech. ii. 13; ix. 13, 14, 15, 16; x. 5, 6; xii. 6; Num. xxiv. 17; Isaiah lx. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; lxvi. 19, 20.

"VI. The Jews, restored, shall live peaceably, without being divided into two nations, or contending with one another any more.

Isaiah xi. 13, 14; xiv. 1, 2; Jer. iii. 18; l. 4; Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22; Hos. i. 11.

2. They shall be very numerous, and multiply greatly. Isaiah xxvii. 6; xliv. 3, 4; xlix. 18, 19, 20, 21; liv. 1, 2, 3; lxi. 9; Jer. xxiii. 3; xxx. 18, 19, 20; xxxi. 27; Ezek. xxxi. 37, 38.

3. They shall have great peace, safety, and outward temporal prosperity. Isaiah xxxii. 16, 17, 18; xxxiii. 24; liv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; lx. 18, 21; Jer. xxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6; xxx. 10; xxxi. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40; xxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 9; l. 19, 20; Joel iii. 17, 18; Micah vii. 18, 19, 20; Zeph. iii. 13; Zech. iii. 9, 10.

4. They shall be very glorious, and a blessing in the whole earth. Isaiah xix. 24, 25; lxi. 9; Jer. xxxiii. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 26; Zeph. iii. 19; Zech. viii. 13.

"VII. The land of Judea shall be made eminently fruitful, like a Paradise; or the Garden of God.

Isaiah xxix. 17; xxxv. 1, 2, 7, 9; li. 3, 16; liv. 11, 12, 13; lv. 12, 13; lx. 13, 17; lxv. 25; Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27; xxxvi. 36; Joel iii. 18; Amos ix. 13, 14.

"VIII. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and after the full restoration of the Jews, shall never be destroyed, nor infested with enemies any more.

Isaiah lii. 1; xxvi. 1; lx. 18; xxxiii. 6; Joel iii. 17; Obadiah 17; Zech. xiv. 10, 11; Jer. xxxi. 38, 39, 40; Ezek. xxxviii. 11.

"IX. A little before the time of the Jews' call and conversion, there shall be great wars, confusion and desolation throughout all the earth.

Isaiah xxxiv. throughout; Joel iii. 1—10; Zeph. iii. 8, 9; Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26; Haggai ii. 21, 22, 23; Jer. xxx. 7, 8, 9, 10; 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

"So that we may say, as Balaam did, prophesying of that very time: *Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!* Num. xxiv. 23.

whole series of prophecy in the Old Testament, that, of the prophecies delivered before the captivity, many have even a chief reference to a yet future return of Judah and Israel to their own land. The returns from Babylon, both of Judah and Israel, were very limited, but especially those of the ten tribes, so as not to meet the promises in any literal fulfilment.

The expressions in Deut. xxx. 1—6, (following that remarkable prophecy of their dispersion among all nations) naturally lead our minds to a return from their present dispersion to their own land.* The declaration, (Isaiah xi. 11,) that “the Lord will again put forth his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people that remaineth, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hanath, and from [123] the islands of the sea,” received not, as far as we are informed, a full literal accomplishment in the return from Babylon: neither did that recorded in Jeremiah, chapter xxx. and xxxi. where the distinction made between the captivity of Israel and of Judah, (xxx. 3.) leads us to expect the return of Israel,† [124] an event which appears yet to be accomplished. The apostle

* Josephus says, (Book xi. chap. 5.) “The entire body of the people of Israel remained in that country [where they were carried captive]; wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude not to be estimated by numbers.”

† In the *Quarterly Review* of Burnes’ Travels into Bokhara, the following remarks occur respecting the ten tribes—“It has been for some time past a current opinion in the East, that the offspring of the lost tribes of Israel survive among the Afghans. Mr. Burnes, after shewing some anachronism in the genealogies, and that there are similar corruptions in those of Greece and Rome, &c. says:—

“The Afghans looks like Jews; they say that they are descended from Jews, and the younger brother marries the widow of the elder, according to the law of Moses. The Afghans entertain strong prejudices against the Jewish nation, which would at least shew that they have no desire to claim without a just cause a descent from them. Since some of the tribes of Israel came to the East, why should we not admit that the Afghans are their descendants, converted to Mahomedanism. I am aware that I am differing from a high authority—W. Elphinstone. [Mr. E. declined the investigation, but thought the accounts of their origin fabulous,] but I trust that I have made it to appear on reasonable grounds.” Vol. I. page 164.

The Baptist Missionaries Carey and Marshman, quote a learned Afghan, as saying, “his nation are Beni Isreal, but not Yahood;” sons of Israel, but not Jews: and inform us that in the Pushtoo or Afghan language, there are more Hebrew words than in that of any other Indian nation.

Mr. Wolff, the Jewish missionary, takes an opposite view. He says, “Having ascertained the total unlikeness of the Afghans to the Jews, in their physiognomy, and also the total discrepancy of their language from the Jews, I think I have demonstrated that the Afghans are in no wise descendants from the Jews. The assertions of a few of them, that they are of the children of Israel, does not prove anything, for they themselves, as well as all the Mahomedans, make a great distinction between the Jews and children of Israel. I have shewn that the idea of the Jews of Bokhara that the ten tribes are

(Rom. xi. 26.) quotes Isaiah lix. 20, as referring to their future conversion, and thereby justifies our taking such a view of that prophecy, and others of a similar kind. The whole series of chapters, Ezekiel xxxvi. to xxxix. inclusive, with several other instances, might be added, as prophecies that have yet, as far as we can at present judge, to receive their chief accomplishment.

The REJECTION OF THE JEWS is foretold in language so plain and literal, and has been so minutely accomplished, and they have been so widely scattered, that nearly all men that dwell on the face of the whole earth have sensible and visible witnesses before their eyes of the truth of God's word, the purity of his law, and the certainty of his judgments.

And can we suppose that the judgment and righteousness in the threatening shall be so literally accomplished, and the mercy and loving kindness in the promise not be also fulfilled literally and exactly? This is not the method of him whose name is LOVE. The very sight of their present scattering and degradation, may be to us who believe God's word, a palpable evidence of the reality of their future restoration and honour, and shew us how to interpret the innumerable plain predictions which foretell this their future glory.

The extraordinary fulness of scripture is most wonderful. [125] When do we seem to get wholly at its unsearchable riches! Oh how like it is to the divine mind as manifested in the works of creation! There are inexhaustible treasures of grace in its sacred contents to enrich the humble and patient inquirer from age to age!

Many of the prophecies of the Old Testament shew a very important, humbling, and afflictive course of dealings with the Jews, on their return and before their final glory. Zech. xii. —xiv. Joel ii. and iii. Isaiah lxvi.

The NEW TESTAMENT brings before us divine truth in its

around Lassa and in China is highly probable."—See Wolff's Researches, p. 521.

Mr. Wolff, however, records thus the opinion of Capt. Riley, whom he calls "the best Arabic scholar in India," (residing at Nusseerabad, as given in August, 1832,) "I concur in opinion with those who aver the Afghans to be of Jewish descent, though these people now, as might be expected, are indifferent about acknowledging it; dissenting in this idea, as I do, from Mr. Elphinstone, who, in part of a work on Kabool, slights that conjecture, and in another, (vol. i. p. 309,) tells us of a genealogist among them who traced his origin to the Babylonish captivity. They have a great number of Hebrew proper names in their appellatives, and their dialect still retains the genitive sign of the Chaldeans and Syrians, and other marks of cognate affinity." He says, in a subsequent letter, I suppose in answer to Mr. Wolff's doubts, "I think enough has been advanced to connect their origin in some way or other with the house of Israel."

A work of much useful information, of Mr. Simon, connecting the American Indians with the Jews, may be also read on this point.

spiritual character. The object of our Lord's first coming, however, was not, we are told, *to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil* (or complete *πληρῶσαι*). Without, then, setting aside the prophecies of the Old Testament, the New adds to them those spiritual elements which are the highest glories of the whole church. This view accounts for its comparative silence on the literal glories of the Jewish nation.

In the New Testament, therefore, little is said on that subject; but there is nothing to throw doubt upon our hopes respecting the Jews; and two strong passages, in oblique hints, however, rather than by positive assertions, confirm this hope. Both proceed from our Lord. One is, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 24. The other is his reply to the inquiry of his disciples, "Wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom of Israel! And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts i. 6, 7. The book of Revelation, being for the use of the [126] Gentile churches, says little directly on the Jews, but the seventh chapter seems to include both the literal and spiritual Israel, and the Kings of the East, (Rev. xvi. 12,) apparently refer to the Jews; and they unite in the songs of praise at the close, in chapter xix. The general tendency of what we read in the New Testament is to lead our minds from the temporal kingdom and the earthly glory, to that spiritual kingdom which belongs now to Jew and Gentile, as a preparation for possessing an heavenly inheritance; but still with this is clearly predicted, in harmony with Old Testament prophecies—a kingdom which shall one day universally prevail,—for a day is coming when it shall be said, "The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever:" Rev. xi. 15; and the inheritance of this kingdom is our great reward in the day of Christ. (Matt. xxv. 34; Rev. iii. 21; v. 10.) Every book almost of the New Testament contains expressions which shew that God has not cast away his people Israel.

Respecting the future CONVERSION of the whole Jewish nation, as distinct from their national restoration, the prophecies are clear and decisive. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward, shall the children of Israel return; and seek the Lord their God; and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." Hos. iii. 4, 5.

The New Testament does not here speak obscurely. As when Moses went in before the Lord he took the veil off, *Exod. xxxiv. 34*, so shall it be with the [127] Jewish nation; “Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.” *2 Cor. iii. 16*. If they have in part now fallen, *their fulness* shall hereafter come in. *Rom. xi. 12*. If they are now *cast away* they shall be *received*; (*ver. 15.*) if they have been *broken off*, they shall be *again grafted in*; (*ver. 23.*) and so *all Israel shall be saved*, *ver. 26*. How cheering are such promises! and they are accompanied with the delightful assurance that their recovery shall be a blessing to the world, even *as life from the dead*.

It is to be feared, that some who are warm friends to missions among the heathen, have not sufficient faith with regard to efforts among the Jews, and think it almost a hopeless undertaking. But is not this directly contrary to the plain argument of the Apostle on this very point; “God is able to graft them in. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree, *how much more* shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?” *Rom. xi. 23, 24*.

The promised future conversion of the Jews, with its effects on the world, should both encourage our hopes and excite our labours for them. This duty is brought before us in the statement of God’s design in their present unbelief—“They have now not believed in your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy.” *Rom. xi. 31*. The progress of recent events respecting the Jews has been peculiarly interesting. The establishment of a British episcopal church on Mount Sion, the deputation of the Scotch church to the Jews, and the appointment of a British vice-consul at Jerusalem, are remarkable signs of these [128] days. See the author’s ‘Time to Favour Zion,’ just published.

There are other points respecting this subject on which Christians have been more divided, and to which it may be desirable briefly to advert.

THE PRIORITY OF THE GENERAL CONVERSION OF THE JEWS to that of the Gentiles, has been much discussed. They appear to be closely connected events: if we only considered the vastness of the scene of labour, and the immense work to be accomplished, we should see how easily both may be advancing at the same time, and mutually promoting each other. Vast as are the hopes and means of the real church of Christ, the progress hitherto made in its purification, and the conversion of the world, is very limited. The work is so large that it may advance yet very much more, and quite enough be left,

after the conversion of the Jews, to realize the assured hope, that that event shall be *as life from the dead* to the world.

The supposition that the Jews will hereafter be the **EMINENTLY** honoured instruments of good to the Gentiles, and that, in connection with their restoration, we may hope for the **UNIVERSAL** conversion of the Gentiles, appears to the author to have a truly scriptural foundation. It is true in past history. Undoubtedly the Evangelists sowed the first seeds of Christianity in many kingdoms now nationally professing the Christian faith. Though the Christian nations were not in general, nor exclusively, probably, in any particular instance, brought to that profession by the means of Jewish missionaries, the effects of the labours of the apostles, the way in which their writings have been and are blessed, and [129] the fact that all the knowledge of true religion, that is now in the world, came originally through the Jewish nation, have remarkably commenced the fulfilment of such predictions on this point in the Old Testament, as Isaiah ii. 1—5; Micah v. 7; Zechariah viii. 23. These facts by no means, however, shut out hopes of yet more extended blessings from this people. Indeed, who can but feel a joyful hope when he looks at the whole history of the Jews and their present state, and the promises connected with their conversion? Who can but rejoice in the blessed anticipation that they will be again, as in the first days of the church, most enlarged blessings to the Gentiles? See them scattered in every country knowing almost every tongue, valuing every where their original scriptures, marked as a peculiar people by all nations, and a city set on a hill in every land. Consider yet further, that the New Testament is translated into their beloved original language, circulated among them, and received and read by them. Then look at their restoration, and the cheering promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, Zech. xii. 10. Observe them, thus penitent and believing, going back to the land in which their fathers dwelt, Ezek. xxxvii. 25, and thus becoming witnesses above all exception to the veracity of God; and who can but hope, both from the providence and prophecy of God, that such marvellous events, attracting the attention of the whole earth, will be a spiritual blessing beyond calculation to every nation, and that the converted Jews shall thus most effectively aid the general conversion of the Gentiles.*

* The author once thought it most probable that the Jews would be the chief missionaries to the Gentiles; but he has been led to think that *those that escape* who are sent to the nations, are Gentiles spared from the last judgments and not Jews, and that the general aspect of the prophecies is the Gentiles coming to Jerusalem to learn, rather than the Jews going to the Gentiles. Isa. ii. 2, 60; Zech. xiv.

[130] Yet it becomes us to speak of unfulfilled prophecy with reserve and humility; while the general result is clear, the particular mode of accomplishment is left in obscurity for the most important practical purposes—the exercise of faith, and hope, and humility. Let us then be satisfied with general views, without being anxious to understand or state the exact mode in which God will accomplish his purposes, and explain the various minute particulars connected with them; about which after all, we may entirely mistake, for we are not prophets, and should not speak as if we were. While we search the prophets diligently, let us be willing to suspend our judgment concerning such deep subjects as the various particulars of God's purposes, till it shall please him to make them manifest by the event. Surely there is much wisdom in the saying of one of the fathers—*melius est dubitare de occultis quam litigare de incertis*.

Having given these general remarks, we need not pursue the subject much farther as to particular prophecies respecting the Jews in the Old Testament yet unfulfilled.

The following rules have been given to assist in ascertaining whether prophecies respecting the Jews are yet to be fulfilled. 1. When Judea and Israel are both included in the promised blessings, as Isaiah xi. 12;—2. When permanent blessings are promised to them, as Ezekiel xxxix. 29;—3. When the time for the fulfilment is designated by the "latter [131] days," as in Hosea iii. 5;—4. When they are accompanied by predictions of universal peace, as in Isaiah xi.

We would not enter into a particular examination of these rules, which would lead to a lengthened discussion; but only observe generally, that it is well, in interpreting any particular prophecy, to consider whether it may not have received its designed first accomplishment as it regards the Jews,—or be now in a course of spiritual accomplishment,—or be hereafter to be accomplished in a higher and more extended sense. It is not quite clear that the term "for ever," annexed to promises, necessarily implies perpetuity. The statutes and ordinances of the Jews were said to be for ever, (Exod. xii. 17; xxxi. 16.) when they appear only to have been given while that dispensation lasted: though we know not so distinctly the purposes of Jehovah respecting the Jews, as to speak without hesitation.

Two or three instances may illustrate the subject. In Isaiah ii. 1—5, there is a promise of the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, by the going forth of the law out of Zion. That it was in some degree fulfilled in the apostolic times will be generally admitted; we are now also come to Mount Zion, Heb. xii. 22, and a fuller literal accomplishment will doubtless

yet take place. In like manner, Isaiah lx. 1—5, began its course of accomplishment on the day of Pentecost, and will, in the fulness of time, through the converted Jews,* be more abundantly [132] and literally fulfilled, and all be realized. The prophecy of Zechariah, (viii. 23.) that “ten men should take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew,” was remarkably accomplished in the preaching of the word by the apostles, though we would not preclude a further accomplishment hereafter.

For a particular explanation of the various prophecies, the reader is referred to the writings of those who have deeply studied this subject; especially Mede, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, Cuninghame, &c. Scott’s Answer to Rabbi Crool contains also much information. Expectations of a mere earthly kingdom, and worldly splendour and glory, as they are far below the promised glory, so also they seem inconsistent with our Saviour’s declaration, John xviii. 36, “My kingdom is not of this world;” but this declaration must be taken in connexion with those which shew that a universal kingdom of Christ shall be established on the ruins of all others, Daniel ii. 44; vii. 27, and Rev. xi. 15. The special blessings which Christ bestows on his people, in his kingdom, are holy, spiritual, and heavenly; whatever be its outward glory.

The glory of the Jewish nation when restored and converted, and the blessedness from this to the whole earth, is the theme of many a glowing prediction of scripture, which our former statements will shew remain yet to be realized. The author, in a sermon before the Jews’ Society, has dwelt at some [133] length on this subject. See the Sermon in the Author’s Occasional Works. He stated his views thus:—

The salvation of Israel is connected with **THE COMING OF THE SAVIOUR**. St. Paul shews, that “all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer.” Rom. xi. 26. So Isaiah declares, “Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you,” Isaiah xxxv. 4; and in his eleventh chapter, he connects the restoration of Israel with the reign of Christ. Daniel also foretells, “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which standeth for the children of thy

* Archbishop Leighton, in a sermon on Isaiah lx. 1, applies the text to the whole church of Christ; yet thus speaks of it with reference to the Jews:—“Undoubtedly the people of the Jews shall once more be commanded to arise and shine, and their return shall be the riches of the Gentiles, and that shall be a more glorious time than ever the church of Christ did yet behold.” Nor is there any inconvenience if we think that the high expressions of this prophecy have some spiritual reference to that time, since the great doctor of the Gentiles applies some words of the former chapter to that purpose. (Rom. xi. 29.) They forget a main point of the church’s glory, who pray not daily for the conversion of the Jews.

people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," Dan. xii. 1. So in the Psalms it is predicted, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory, Psalms cii. 16. The precise period of our Lord's return is nowhere, I apprehend, revealed to us; but whether it precedes, or accompanies, or follows the return of Judah and Israel to their own land, varied expressions in God's word lead us to the conclusion that it is immediately connected with that event. In Micha ii. 13, a passage applied by Lowth to the general restoration of the Jewish nation, we have this statement: "The breaker is gone up before them; they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it, and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them," Micah ii. 13. We read in Zechariah xii. 9, 10. "It shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come [134] against Jerusalem; and I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him." And again: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle: and his feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet," Zech. xiv. 3; and presently afterwards, "the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." And so, in the closing book of Revelation, it is declared, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7.

These varied quotations all bear to one point, that the Lord Jesus will personally and visibly come, not only for the destruction of his enemies, but also in mercy to his people Israel.

That announcement, which the angel made to Mary before his birth, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke i. 32, is still to be fulfilled: our Lord Christ has never yet had the throne of David, nor reigned over the house of Jacob, which includes the twelve tribes of Israel.

Their future history is to be the very contrast of their present state. They are all to be sought out, gathered together, and restored to their own land. God himself will take this work especially under his own care. Ezek. xxxiv. 11—13. The nations of the earth are described as assisting in it, Isaiah xlix. 22; lxvi. 20.

When thus gathered from all lands, and re-assembled [135] once more in their own country, they will be placed under the care and government of our Lord Christ. "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David." Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Luke i. 32, 33. Who can conceive the joy of that Shepherd, who wept over their desolation, in the recovering again of these his lost sheep; or, who can imagine their joy after all their wanderings, terrors, dangers, and miseries, in being thus sought out and restored, governed and for ever blessed by Him?

In that full and minute description given by Ezekiel of the latter-day glory, of the city, the temple, and the promised land, the prophet closes all by stating, "The name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there. Ezek. xlviii. 13. Again, "Thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken," (Isa. lxii. 12.) is a part of their promised glory. The very expression, *city*, shews gathering together, and national restoration, both union and a kingdom. And when Zion is thus *a city not forsaken*, that prediction will be realized, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Isaiah lx. 15.

Great are the blessings to be bestowed upon Israel: and what shall be the issue of all this? Glory will be given to God in the highest, and universal joy diffused among all holy beings.

The conversion and salvation, the restoration and glory of Israel, will eminently display the honour of the triune Jehovah. What riches of forbearance, patience, long-suffering, and faithfulness will it manifest in our heavenly Father! How wonderful [136] the glories of his electing love in once rebellious, and then recovered Israel! What efficacy in our Redeemer's blood! What a prevalency in his intercession for his worst and bitterest enemies! What omnipotent energy and grace in the Holy Ghost, by his overcoming all their infidelity, prejudices, and obstinacy! Oh, what a bright and valuable jewel in the Redeemer's *many crowns*, (Rev. xix. 12,) at the latter day, will be converted Israel, holy and joyful in their own land!

What joy also in heaven! If the angels joy *over one sinner that repents*, (Luke xv. 10,) what will be their joy over the restoration of the long-lost, the ancient people of God? Heaven itself is filled with patriarchs, and kings, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, the very ancestors of these Jews. *They* cannot be uninterested in the remnant to be saved. Oh! how will hallelujahs afresh resound through all the heavenly man-

sions, when their own descendants, after so many ages of delay, at length return to the Saviour, and yield themselves to him!

Nor will the nations of the earth be without their share in this general joy. "The Gentiles are to rejoice with his people." Deut. xxxii. 43. Songs of glory will at length burst forth from every land to the Divine Redeemer. When we are told, "He has remembered his mercy and truth towards the house of Israel," it is added, "And all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth; make a loud noise, rejoice and sing praise." Psalms xcvi. 3. And so "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Hab. ii. 14.

[137] The whole history of the Jewish church* foretold and illustrated by prophecy, presents many a striking lesson. It shews us the sovereign, righteous, and merciful government of Jehovah: the fatal consequences of unbelief; the infinite importance of knowing the day of salvation, and rightly improving our spiritual privileges. It holds forth many an affecting illustration of the wisdom and power, the forbearance and loving-kindness, the justice and compassion of the great Lord of all.

CHAPTER IX.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING NATIONS AND COUNTRIES CONNECTED WITH THE JEWS.

[138] As all the prophecies bear on Christ and his church, whether Jewish or Christian, but little is said about nations

* The Rev. H. Howarth, in his Hulsean Lectures, "on Jesus of Nazareth," speaking of the influence of the Jews now, says, "The world's wealth is their's—the wheels of the mightiest governments of modern days have been moved by their assistance. Wars are proclaimed and treaties guaranteed not without their potent intervention; and although still an humbled and unobtrusive race, none are ignorant of their real sway, nor of the almost omnipotent control which they can exert over the destinies of states." In his notes he refers to a Memoir of N. M. Rothschild, in the Metropolitan Magazine, 1836, which speaks of the continental wars as reducing the inferior princes of Germany to a state of painful obligation to the leading members of the Hebrew persuasion, who had so long been treated with scorn.

The journal du Commerce states that the five brothers the Rothschilds have taken part in most of the great financial affairs of France, of England, and almost every country. Their power was at one time such that they were free to make either peace or war.

and kingdoms while they have no direct concern with the church. The reason is obvious. The scriptures were written for the use of those who receive them. Prophecies would be useless to those who have no connection with the church of Christ, and either reject or are ignorant of the Sacred Writings. Yet the prophecy of Noah, respecting his three sons, (Gen. ix. 25—27,) is an epitome of the history of all nations. The prophecies of Daniel too, contain an abridgment of the history of the four great empires that have prevailed in the earth.

These empires are foretold in the second chapter of Daniel, under the figure of a golden image, and in the seventh chapter under the figure of four wild beasts; representing the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires.*

[139] In considering the fulfilment of prophecies respecting nations connected with the Jews, we have a most striking evidence of the inspiration of the holy scriptures; an evidence that is obvious to every sincere inquirer, and every candid mind.

For the full proof of this the reader is referred to the following works:—Bishop Newton's Dissertations, Davison on Prophecy, and Keith on the evidence of Prophecy.

The prophecies respecting BABYLON are recorded—Isa. xiii. xiv. xlv.—xlvii. Jer. l. li.: respecting NINEVEH, by Nahum, and Zephaniah ii. 13—15: respecting TYRE, Isaiah xxiii. Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. xxviii. EGYPT, in Ezek. xxix. xxx.—xxxii.* AMMON, Ezek. xxi. 28—32; xxv. 1—7. Jeremiah xlix. 1—6. EDMON, in Isaiah xxxiv. Jer. xlix. Ezekiel xxxv. Obadiah. MOAB, in Jer. xlviii. Ezekiel xxv. 8. The PHILISTIANS, Amos. i. 6—8. Zephaniah ii. 4—7. Jer. xlvii. And the ARABS in Gen. xvi. 10—12.

It is most strengthening to our faith to know, from the universal, though often unconscious, testimony of all historians and travellers, Christian or infidel, that these prophecies have been fulfilled, if not wholly, yet in a vast variety of particulars, in the sight of all men at the present hour.

* A clear and plain illustration of these prophecies will be found in Cuninghame's Political Destiny of the Earth.

† The situation of Egypt, at the present moment, cannot but be one of much interest to the Christian; not only from its ruler having now possession of the Holy Land, but also from the peculiarly vigorous, active, and enterprising spirit of the pacha and his son, and the powerful army and navy that they have got together, connected as these are with the state of Turkey and Russia; and with the predictions in the latter days, respecting Israel, Assyria, and Egypt, (Isaiah xix. 18—25.) Bishop Lowth considers Isaiah xviii. as referring to Egypt. Bishop Horsley and Faber refer it to a maritime country, meaning Great Britain. America may possibly be intended. A little time will more fully develope these remarkable prophecies.

[140] There is a further use and application of these prophecies made by our Lord (compare Isa. xiii. 10, and Matt. xxiv. 29, &c.) and his apostles, on which Dean Woodhouse makes the following remarks:—

“Throughout the whole of the prophetic scripture a time of retribution and vengeance on God’s enemies is announced. It is called *the day of the Lord*; (Mal. iv. 5,) *the day of wrath and slaughter*: (Rom. ii. 5,) *of the Lord’s anger*, (Zeph. ii. 3,) *visitation*, (Mic. vii. 4,) *and judgment*, (Matt. x. 15,) *the great day*, (Jude 6,) *and the last day*, (John vi. 44.) At the same time it is to be observed, that this kind of description, and the same expressions which are used to represent this great day, are also employed by the prophets to describe the fall and punishment of particular states and empires; of BABYLON, by Isaiah (ch. xiii.) of EGYPT, by Ezekiel (xxx. 2—4; xxxii. 7, 8,) of JERUSALEM, by Jeremiah, Joel, and by our Lord, (Matt. xxiv.); and in many of these prophecies the description of the calamity which is to fall on any *particular* state or nation is so blended and intermixed with that general destruction which in the final days of vengeance will invade all the inhabitants of the earth, that the industry and skill of our ablest interpreters have been scarcely equal to separate and assort them. Hence it has been concluded by judicious divines, that these partial prophecies and particular instances of the divine vengeance, whose accomplishment we know to have taken place, are presented to us as types, certain tokens, and forerunners of some greater events which are also disclosed in them. To the dreadful time of universal vengeance they all appear to look forward, beyond their first and more immediate object.

[141] Little indeed can we doubt that such is to be considered one use and application of these prophecies, since we see them thus applied by our Lord and his Apostles.” He then refers to Isa. xiii. 10, and xxxiv. 1—6, 8, and compares them with Rev. vi. 12—17, and states, that though Idumea is mentioned by the prophet as the particular object of vengeance, yet it has a more sublime and future prospect, and in this sense the whole world is its object. Such prophecies “have all of them been typically fulfilled in the fall of those nations whose after-ruin they prefigured; but a more perfect completion is reserved for them, with which their grandeur of design and sublimity of expression more exactly accord: for they seem to unite with the apocalyptic prophecy in pointing ultimately and emphatically to the great day of the Lord’s wrath.

But even out of *the great tribulation* (the tribulation, even the great one, της θλιψως της μεγαλης, Rev. vii. 14) *a great multitude which no man can number* are to be saved (ver. 9). And when

it is ended the Jews are to be a blessing to all nations: Jer. xxxiii. 7—9. Ezek. xxxiv. 26. Zech. viii. 13. Rom. xi. 12—15. It is this concluding of *all* (Gentiles as well as Jews) in *unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*, that made the apostle cry out—*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

[142] There are many PROPHECIES THAT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED in the state of the Christian church since the coming of Christ, and that are now manifestly fulfilling. We may refer to Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, in proof of this. A considerable part of the book of Revelation has, in this way, been made sufficiently clear by the event.

The statements given by St. Paul respecting a falling away of the Christian church, are very striking. He tells the Thesalonians, (second Epistle, chap. ii. verses 3, 4.) that the last day should not come, “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” All history shews how exactly this, with the following part of the description (verse 6—12.) marks the Pope of Rome, arrogating the title of His Holiness, claiming infallibility, dispensing absolution, restraining the scriptures, exalting his own decrees above [143] them, usurping a right to depose kings, and the like. The same falling away is described again, (1 Tim. iv. 1.) “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats.” The apostacy of the Roman Catholic church is here again distinctly marked—their multitude of mediators—worship of saints—legends, and pretended miracles—the celibacy of their clergy—and the numerous fastings from particular meats, are clearly foretold.*

* God having promised a blessing on the study of the prophetic word; and many of the most eminent and honoured of God's servants, after lengthened

Now these very predictions are in the keeping of the Roman Catholics. They, like the Jews, are unexceptionable librarians of the prophecy. And if it be asked, why they do not renounce popery, we have the very same reason to give as we had respecting the Jews; thousands and tens of thousands, and millions and tens of millions, when the holy scriptures were fully laid before men at the reformation, on this very ground forsook the Roman church; and the perseverance in corruption of the rest, till the entire destruction of this fallen church, [144] is foretold in the very same writings which predict its fall from primitive purity.

There are similar prophecies respecting the *Mahomedans* given in the books of Daniel, chap. viii. 9—25, and Revelations, chapter ix. which have also been remarkably fulfilled.

In considering **THE FUTURE STATE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**, let us first look at the peculiar design of God in directing the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. The gospel was to be preached to *every creature*, and the promise was added, “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” and the threatening annexed, “he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark xvi. 15. Though “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” (1 Tim. ii. 4,) yet it does not appear by the scriptures or by facts, that he purposed by the present preaching of the gospel to save all men. Matt. xxiv. 14. The most extended preaching of the gospel is the hour of God’s judgment. Rev. xiv. 6. St. Paul leads us to this idea, that through *the fall of the Jews, salvation came to the Gentiles*; that the Gentiles by *unbelief, high-mindedness, and not continuing in his goodness* may be cut off; and that *the natural branches shall be grafted into their own olive-tree*. Rom. xi. 11, 20—24. St. James gives us the same view of the design of the gospel, (Acts xv. 14); God graciously visiting the Gentiles **TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE TO HIS NAME**; and then building again the tabernacle of David, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles. Our Lord says to his disciples; “ye are not of the world; but I have chosen you out of the world.” John xv. 19. There are, as we have seen, clear predictions of a [145] falling

study, having for centuries come to the conclusion, that the Man of Sin describes the Pope, and Babylon, Papal Rome, it is in the highest degree improbable that this interpretation should be erroneous. Whatever farther fulfilment may take place in the close of the mystery of iniquity, and in its final destruction, the past fulfilment has been such as to satisfy the general body of Protestants that this is a true interpretation: indeed Cressener, in his “*Demonstration of the Apocalypse*,” has shown that Roman Catholic writers themselves furnish many testimonies that help this Protestant application of the prophecy. See farther remarks on this subject in following chapters.

away in the Christian church, (1 Tim. iv. 1—3; Dan. vii. 25.) and this falling away, in the sight of all men, has largely taken place. JUDGMENTS also on the professing church of Christ are clearly foretold. The falling away is connected with awful consequent judgments (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 9—11, 26; 2 Thess. ii. 8—12.) which we dare not overlook in considering the future state of the Christian church.

From all these things we may gather, that the present dispensation of the gospel, till the Jews are restored, was not designed for the universal conversion of the whole Gentile world; but to gather a church out of the Gentiles.* It is after the punishment of God's enemies, that his glorious kingdom is to be fully established; though there be indeed a full harvest yet to be gathered in the previous day of tribulation, as shewn in a subsequent chapter.

In considering the punishment of those enemies, we may first notice that the destruction of Popery is an event clearly predicted. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (or hinders) will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8. The voice shall yet be heard, "Babylon the great is fallen." Rev. xviii. 2. The pouring out of the vials, (Rev. xvi.) is probably already in progress, and the fall of the mystical Babylon must follow. May God's people everywhere obey their Saviour's direction, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not [146] partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 4. The destruction of the imposture of Mahomet is equally clear; "he shall be broken without hand," Daniel viii. 25. "The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up," Rev. xvi. 12. The prediction is plain, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Rev. xix. 20.*

A continuance of the servants of Christ intermingled with the ungodly till the end, and then a separation, and the punishment of the ungodly, is also clearly foretold. Well

* The author refers with satisfaction to Mr. M'Neile's Sermon on the times of the Gentiles, as conclusive to his own mind.

† The application of the prophecies to Popery is noticed in a subsequent chapter.

does it become us, diligently to search the scriptures respecting this separation. See Matthew xiii. 36—52; xxv. Luke xvii. 20—37, and various other passages. There is no intimation in these passages of a previous Millennium, and there are expressions in them that seem inconsistent with the idea of an intervening period of universal righteousness. That glorious millennial kingdom follows the coming of Christ and the punishment of his enemies; that coming is also the blessed hope of the believer.

The Christian, though now surrounded with difficulties, and with a probability of a temporary increase of those difficulties, may yet lift up his head full of expectation and hope. His Saviour is "King of kings, and Lord of lords. He must reign till he [147] has put all enemies under his feet." 1 Cor. xv. 25. The agitations of the present time should only lead him to those views and feelings which David so beautifully expresses in the 46th Psalm, "God is our refuge, and strength, a very present help in trouble." Whatever may be the precise and exact meaning of the promises, the general result is clear; the full triumph of Christ over all his enemies. How rich are the promises! "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isaiah xi. 9; "the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him," Daniel vii. 14; Satan shall be "bound for a thousand years," and the saints be "priests of God and of Christ, and reign with him a thousand years," Rev. xx. Our hopes cannot but be raised by these and multitudes of similar promises, to a far happier scene than this lower world has ever yet witnessed—a scene which must now be fast approaching.

In what aspect, then, shall we regard those blessed exertions which are now making by religious societies, and which fill the heart with hope and joy? Let us mark first the extent and success of those exertions.

Unquestionably we live in a remarkable day of the church of Christ. There is a peculiar shaking of the nations and larger efforts are making by faithful Christians to diffuse the gospel, and the word of God has been circulated to a greater extent, than in any former era of Christianity.

The success in modern missionary exertions has been indeed supposed by some to be inadequate to [148] the means used, and to the expectations reasonably excited by them; and it has been thought that the cause of this has been the neglect of the Jews as the great medium for the conversion of the world.

But is not the supposed fact itself really unfounded? Looking at the miraculous gifts and at the fervent piety of the primitive church, and especially looking at the large outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we need not be surprised that the gospel spread then as it did. National conversions, however, did not then take place in a few years. The Christian church was, during the whole of the first three centuries, more or less persecuted and despised, and consisted of individual churches. A person at first sight may be apt to suppose, that, when the apostle wrote the epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, the whole of Rome and Corinth were Christians: but it need not be proved that this was far indeed from being the case. Though it is freely allowed that the gospel then spread with a rapidity unexampled in any age since; yet we apprehend that the reason for this, in subordination to the divine wisdom, must be looked for, not in the neglect of employing men of any particular nation, but in the sins of Christians; in their lukewarmness and coldness; in the want of a missionary spirit in the church at large; and especially in the want of a general and enlarged spirit of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; in the small extent to which the doctrine of Christ crucified has been preached; and in the defect of a spirit of union and love among real Christians.

Passing by Roman Catholic Missions, as not needing here distinct consideration, it may justly be said that the success which has been already [149] given to efforts to spread the gospel, is larger than some seem to think; especially when we consider the few instruments employed, the short space of time in which they have laboured, and the difficulties which they have had to encounter, before they could simply and fully declare to the heathen, in their own tongue, *the unsearchable riches of Christ*. Eph. iii. 8. It was long in general after the formation of their societies, before the missionaries went forth to their work, and long after they landed, before they could preach to the natives. There are even now very few *European* or *American* or *Native* missionaries preaching fully to the heathen in their native tongues; probably the number but a few years since fell short of the seventy disciples whom our Lord sent forth, and foreigners could not, from the very necessity of the case, speak with the ease and fluency of a native; many of them spoke with that broken and foreign accent, and those hesitating expressions, which necessarily greatly hindered the power of their statements.

And notwithstanding all difficulties, the gospel has spread, and is spreading, more extensively every year: thousands and tens of thousands are converts and communicants; and all

these things are doubtless preparing the way for the church's full glory. Look at the effects of the labours of Swartz and others. They began in great discouragement; and now there are, as the result of those labours, upwards of twenty thousand native Protestant Christians in South India. Look at the state of the colony of Sierra Leone, where the author witnessed the negroes in the greatest degradation, as naked savages and miserable idolators, and of whom a competent and unexceptionable [150] witness, a few years afterwards, said, that their spirit and conduct were such that he was persuaded there was not to be seen upon earth a community of equal size so truly exemplary. Look at thousands of Christian negroes in the West Indies, blessed by the gospel, imparted in modern times through the labours of the various Protestant Missionaries. Look again at the South Sea Islands, emerging from the lowest barbarism and idolatry to piety and civilization, through the persevering efforts of Christian Missionaries in our own day. Every where, in proportion as the gospel of Christ has been fully and faithfully preached, it has been *the power of God to the salvation* of the heathen.

The promise then still abides faithful. *My word—that goeth forth of my mouth—shall not return unto me void:* Isaiah lv. 11; and the extent to which that word is going forth, concurs with the cheering light of prophecy to strengthen our hopes, that however dark the clouds now, and however severe the storm that we previously expect, may be, the dawn of the millennial day of glory cannot be far distant.

For we are not left in doubt as to the aspect in which all this is to be viewed. In the 14th of Revelation, we have a prediction of three angels going forth with distinct voices. The first angel flies “in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters.” The second angel declares the fall [151] of Babylon, and the third angel the wrath of God on all who worship the beast and his image. Here we see predicted the diffusion of the gospel. Dr. Cressener, in some discussions on this part of the chapter, endeavoured to shew that *the time of the patience of the saints* is the fiercest persecution of the true church by the beast. It may however relate to the approach of the season of reward; as that is the great scope of the chapter. Amidst a severe conflict, there is a rising triumph of the truth, from the proclamation of the first angel to the treading of the vintage. In

the course of these events—is the coming of the Son of man on the cloud, and the reaping of the harvest, or the gathering of God's saints (Mark iv. 26—29. Matt. xiii. 24—30; xxiv. 31. John iv. 35—38,) and then the treading of the vintage, or the punishment of his enemies, Rev. xix. and Isa. lxiii. 1—6. The past history of the church, and the continued exertions of religious societies, shew that at least the first angel, with his warning voice, commencing probably at the Reformation, has already taken his flight: the other angels follow, and soon the Son of man appears in the clouds to establish his glorious kingdom, Dan. vii. 13, 14.

Mr. Cuninghame, on Rev. xiv. 14, observes, "It is plain that the vision does not belong to the first moment of the advent: for that is described by the one like the Son of Man coming in the clouds (Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30,); here on the contrary, John sees him sitting on a cloud, which implies not the action of coming, but that he is already present." On this he makes this just reflection, "The moment of our Lord's first approach is, in this fourteenth chapter, as every where else, sedulously concealed [152] from us. How unspeakably awful and awakening is this thought!"

We must contemplate and meditate upon the future glory of the church, as revealed in the prophetic pages of scripture. The study of this, though yet unfulfilled, is not to be neglected; for it is connected with important practical duties. "Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet," (Dan. ix. 2,) and he began to seek the Lord *by prayer and supplication with fasting*. The first Christians, warned by the prophetic intimations of our Lord, fled from Jerusalem, and escaped the tremendous visitations which came upon its inhabitants; and so there are still duties arising from the expected fulfilment of future prophecies. "Behold, I come quickly! Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Rev. xxii. 7.

We cannot indeed fix any precise time as to *when* future events are to happen. There are several important periods named in scripture, and especially the great era of 1260 prophetic days or years, and these will be noticed afterwards; yet we cannot certainly tell, till events make it more clear, *when* that era commenced. The whole chain of prophecy manifestly leads us to expect that we are on the verge of remarkable events. Even if it be admitted that the 1260 years have not closed (as many think that they did in 1792), and will not come to an end for some years, they must obviously be hastening to their close. But a short period can then elapse before

the coming of Christ for the general establishment of Christ's kingdom. Daniel intimates two further brief periods of thirty and forty-five years; [153] and then says, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days." Dan. xii. 12. The servants of Christ then may well lift up their heads, enlarge the preparatory work, and anticipate, first indeed, intervening trials and awakening judgments on his enemies, and then happier and more prosperous times than the church has ever yet enjoyed. There is enough of clear prediction to animate us to the most strenuous and self-denying exertions for the conversion of Jew and Gentile, the one cause of our Lord and Saviour Christ.

The subject of judgments connected with the coming of Christ will be distinctly considered afterwards. In that time of judgment, however, many passages lead us to expect a great ingathering to the church of Christ. Rev. vii. 9, 14; Isaiah xxvi. 9. And the preparation for this by the Religious Societies of the present day is unspeakably important.

But do not the most wise and judicious Christians differ much in their view of these things? It must indeed be confessed that it is so. Yet in practical results there is a great agreement. Though real Christians differ, in some respects, about the order in which the latter-day glory of the church shall be brought on, and, in some particulars, as to the means by which it shall be accomplished, there is no difference on practical points. There is no question but that the preaching of the Gospel, whether by the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, or the faithful ministry of devoted Missionaries, is a great and divinely appointed duty. There is no doubt but that more earnest prayer for the larger outpouring of the Holy Ghost is an imperative obligation. There is no [154] obscurity in the truth that it is our duty to seek the conversion of the whole world, whether Jewish or Gentile. There is one general expectation, by all who believe God's word, of preceding trials and of the full triumph of our Lord Christ, however they may differ as to the way in which God will bring it to pass. The duty is plain and admitted by each intelligent Christian; the encouragements are great and felt by all; and all difficulties in the way of establishing Christ's kingdom, however to be removed, shall all ultimately be surmounted. Isa. xl. 4.

That great event, the future coming of Christ, predicted in the scriptures, has an all-important bearing on the hopes of the church; yet the precise nature and the time of his coming, and its influence on the conversion of nations, and the blessedness of our earth, are yet involved in the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy. Let not this, however, be any impedi-

ment to active exertion in the cause of Christ. The views of the Apostolical writers were remarkably vivid and distinct respecting the coming of Christ. It is perpetually brought forward by them, and we may see that in their lives and labours, it was attended with a most practical and holy influence. None were more devoted in their efforts to spread the gospel. Those therefore must be grievously mistaken who rest in the speculative part of this subject, and on whom it has the effect of hampering and crippling exertions to promote the advancement of his spiritual kingdom. Whatever be our views of the coming of Christ, as it is an infinitely desirable æra for the church, and since there are events previously to take place in the accomplishing of the number of God's elect, well may we labour by [155] means of Religious Societies thus to "hasten the coming of his kingdom." If he be speedily coming, surely we should desire to be found among those labouring to make the day of grace known before it be too late, (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.) and hastening the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter iii. 12.

CHAPTER XI.

ON ANTICHRIST.

[156] It must always be a painful and distressing subject to a Christian, to have to dwell upon the apostacy of Christians, and the rising up in the Christian church of opposers and enemies to our Divine Redeemer. Phil. iii. 18. It is indeed an unspeakable mercy that God has given to his church such plain and full warning of these enemies, that his people may be effectually guarded, and their faith in his word greatly strengthened by such a clear display of Omniscience; and thence it becomes a duty to set forth this warning; but in doing so, may we have David's feeling, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law." Psalm cxix. 136. May we be among "those who sigh and who cry for all the abominations." Ezek. ix. 4.

Antichrist means an opposer of Christ. The name in the scriptures occurs only in the writings of St. John. He says, "It is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but

they were not of us. [147] Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." And again, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world." 1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3. Again, in his second epistle, verse 7, he says, "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist."

That this is a matter of vast importance will be evident by the strength of the apostle's expressions. It may be gathered, I think, that there is a growing form of Antichrist, from the change of the apostle's expressions: a change which should lead us to tremble at the idea of in any way denying a future coming of our Lord to our world in the flesh. The remarkable variation in the 1st and 2nd epistle of John (not noticed in our translation) respecting Christ's coming in the flesh, seems to mark two stages of Antichrist. In the 1st epistle (iv. 3.) it is, *every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is come* (εληλυθота already come) *is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist, &c.* In the 2nd epistle, verse 7, it is, *many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come* (ερχομενον is coming) *in the flesh; this is the deceiver and the Antichrist.* Denying the coming Saviour is one mark of the last Antichrist.

Mede first applies these predictions (fixing the date of the epistle previous to the destruction of Jerusalem) to those who should come in the name of Christ, *saying, I am Christ*, and the *false prophets* who rose before the destruction of Jerusalem, (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11.) and says, "John thence gathered that it was [158] the last times of the Jewish polity." He supposes him first to refer to Simon Magus as the first heretic, and then to Menander, Saturnius, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus,* &c. understanding by the name of Antichrist, not merely a single man, but an heretic faction; and many false prophets. "But," Mede says, "though I have thought that John, in these places, speaks of false prophets who corrupted the doctrine of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem, yet may also that little sum of the doctrine of Antichrist, by which it is denied that Jesus is the Christ, be accommodated to that great Antichrist, who having substituted his saints as little Christs to be worshipped, by that denies that Jesus is the Christ, as they who worship many gods, deny that Jehovah is God. Even from this epistle (v. 21.) something like this may be collected: for

* Sir Isaac Newton takes the same view. See his Observations, p. 256.

when he had said of Jesus Christ, *this is the true God and eternal life*, he immediately adds, *little children keep yourselves from idols*, intimating a fatal future afterwards, that Christians should worship idols in the place of Christ, that is, false Christs and saints as mediators.”

It will be observed that our Lord, at a later period of his discourse respecting his coming, says, “there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect. Matthew xxiv. 44.

THE SENTIMENTS OF THE FATHERS on the nature of Antichrist furnish no decisive and conclusive guidance to interpretation. They lived before history [159] could have developed the main principles of Popery or Mahomedanism, and had not therefore historical illustrations to guide them; and we as Protestants receive no traditions as decisive authority for the interpretation of the word of God.* Yet the general testimony of the church in any age should not be disregarded, there is at least a partial truth in it; a few extracts, therefore, containing some of their sentiments are here given.

The early Fathers of the church held generally, that there would be a personal Antichrist, born of a Jew, to be developed shortly before the second coming of Christ, and to be destroyed in Judea. Irenæus, while holding that view, suggests that his name might be Lateinos, because the Latins then bore rule, and that name contained the number 666.

JUSTIN MARTYR, in his Dialogue with Trypho, referring to Micah iv. 1, &c. speaks of those as “destitute of just reason who did not understand that which is clear from all the scriptures, that two comings of Christ are announced. One in which a suffering, inglorious, dishonoured, and crucified Saviour is to be preached; but another in which he shall come with glory from the heavens, when also the man of apostacy, speaking great words in the earth against the highest, will dare to do wicked things against us Christians, who, since we have known the way of worshipping God by the law and the doctrine going forth through the apostles of Jesus, from Jerusalem, fly to the God of Jacob.”†

[160] Fulke quotes TERTULLIAN as saying, on 2 Thess. ii. 6. “Who shall be taken away, but the Roman state, whose departing, being dispersed into ten kings, shall bring in Anti-

* See Daillé's, Whitby's, and Barbeyrac's Works on the Fathers as Interpreters of Scriptures.

† Bishop Kay speaks of Justin Martyr as viewing the appearance of the Man of Sin as immediately connected with the second coming of Christ in glory, and his appearance as the prelude of severe persecutions against Christians.—See Bp. Kay's Justin Martyr, p. 103.

christ," of which Fulke goes on to say, "By ten, according to the custom of the Scripture, are meant many, and so was there many kingdoms made of the Roman empire, before the Pope openly usurped Antichristian tyranny." IRENÆUS (in his 5th book against Heresies, ch. 30.) says, "When Antichrist, reigning three years and six months, shall have laid waste all things in this world, and have sat in the temple of Jerusalem, then shall the Lord come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of His Father, casting him, and those that obey him, into the lake of fire; but procuring or bringing with him, unto the just, the times of the kingdom; that is a rest, the seventh day, sanctified; and restoring to Abraham the promise of the inheritance, in which kingdom, says the Lord, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Matt. viii. 11.

The opinions of JEROME may be gathered from his commentaries. He applies, for instance, such expressions in the Psalms, as Psalm ix. 19, thus, "The voice of the church sounds against antichrist, rise to judgment, let not man prevail, that is the man, antichrist; the sinner." He continues the same application to Psalm x. In a similar manner he applies Daniel xi. to antichrist; and in Daniel vii. he speaks of the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel thus,—*"Therefore let us say what all the ecclesiastical writers have delivered, that at [161] the end of the world, when the kingdom of the Romans is to be destroyed, there will be ten kings, who will divide the Roman world among themselves, and an eleventh will arise, a little king, who will overcome three kings of the ten kings; that is the king of the Egyptians, and of Africa, and of Ethiopia; as we may say, will be more manifest in what follows: Who being slain, the other seven kings will submit their necks to the conqueror. And behold, he says, in this horn were eyes, like the eyes of a man. Let us not suppose him, according to the opinion of some, either to be a devil or a demon, but one of the human race, in whom all Satan shall dwell bodily, and a mouth speaking great things, for he is the man of sin, the son of perdition, so that he dares to sit in the temple of God, making himself to be as God."** Jerome afterwards applies that passage, (Daniel vii. 13.) to the personal coming of Christ, con-

* The reader may like to see his statement in his own words: "Ergo dicamus quod omnes Scriptores Ecclesiastici tradiderunt; in consummatione mundi, quando regnum destruendum est Romanorum, decem futuros reges, qui orbem Romanum inter se dividant, et undecimum surrecturum esse, regem parvulum, qui tres reges, de decem regibus superaturus sit: id est Egyptiorum regem, et Aphricæ, et Æthiopiæ: sicut in consequentibus manifestius dicemus. Quibus interfectis etiam septem alii reges, victori colla submittent. Et ecce ait oculi quasi oculi hominis erant in cornu isto. Ne eum putemus,

necting it with Acts i. 11. Jerome's views of the ten kings, and the three kings, are what might have been expected from one living as he did in the 4th century, before the division of the Western, or proper Roman Empire into the European kingdoms. What is called a king in the 17th verse, is called a kingdom in the 23d. There appears, then, sufficient [162] reason for thinking the ten kings to mean ten kingdoms.

The opinions of one or two MODERN WRITERS may be added. Mede applies the prediction of the little horn, Daniel vii. 8, 11, 20, 21, 25, to the Papal antichrist, comparing it with the description of the Beast, Rev. xiii. 5, 6, 7, 14. He thence judges that the horn of Daniel's Beast is altogether the same as the antichrist of John, in the Revelation. And since both were to endure to the perfecting of the kingdom of Christ, he gathers, that the Roman kingdom, of which the last part is antichrist, is the fourth kingdom of Daniel. In his Treatise on 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, &c. on the apostacy of the latter times, Mede discusses, at length, the application of that prophecy to Papal Rome, as the antichrist of the last times, and shews how completely and exactly it applies to Popery.

It will have been seen how generally the fathers, as indeed almost the whole church of Christ, have identified the Man of Sin, of 2 Thessalonians ii. 2, with antichrist.

The predictions respecting the Assyrian, frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, not having been fully realized in the history of the Assyrian of old, have lead many to think that there is a further reference to the antichrist of the last days, in his history. See Isaiah xiv. 25. Vitringa has a lengthened discussion on this application of the Old Testament prophecies, in his Commentary on this passage. See also Lowth, Bishop Lowth, Horsley, and Fry.

Cocceius, in his Treatise on Antichrist, discusses the following passages as applicable to this subject. [163] 2 Thessalonians ii. Matt. xxiv. Daniel xi. Isaiah xiii. xiv. Ezekiel xxiii. xxviii. Rev. xii. xiii. xiv. xvii. Daniel vii. and 1 John i.

The Rev. H. M'Neil, in a very valuable sermon just published, entitled "Antichrist," has given much sound instruction to the church on the prophecies and character of Antichrist. He applies these prophecies, (Matthew xxiv. 9—13; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3;* 2 Thess. ii. 3—8; Daniel vii. 24—26,) to Antichrist. He fully establishes its character, as developed in

juxta quorundam opinionem, vel diabolum esse, vel dæmonem, sed unum de hominibus, in quo totus Satan habet habitaculum sit Corporaliter. Et os loquens ingentia. Est enim homo peccati," &c. 2 Thess. ii.

* See the author's Sermon, "The True Church and the Apostacy," fully applying this passage to the Roman Antichrist.

Popery. (1.) By blasphemous usurpation, 2 Thess. ii. 4. (2.) By claiming supremacy. (3.) By exalting himself above earthly rulers. (4.) By forbidding to marry, 1 Tim. iv. 3. (5.) By denying the atonement, 2 Peter ii. 1. This is firmly fastened on Popery by their doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ in the mass; see Heb. ix. x. and our 31st Article. (6.) By the merchandise of masses, 2 Peter ii. 3. (7.) By the denial of the incarnation, 1 John iv. 2. 3. This also is fully established by the use made of the Virgin Mary in Roman worship, setting aside the sympathy of Christ.

The scriptures which have been quoted from the epistles of St. John and Matthew xxiv. 44, seem to me to justify our viewing the name of Antichrist **GENERALLY**, or in spirit, as descriptive of the veiled and mystical opponents of Christ, and **PARTICULARLY**, or in person, as descriptive of an open and avowed enemy to be put down at the coming of our Lord.

The two forms of Antichrist seem clearly set before us in 2 Thess. ii. We see there a double withholding and a double revealing; a man of sin and a lawless [164] one (*ανομος*) and each have their appropriate character. This by the description, *the Son of perdition*, verse 3, is connected with Judas, John xvii. 22, who sustained this double character; first a thief, though concealed and pretending to honour Christ, and then at the close an avowed traitor, openly betraying him. The first withholding I would apply with the fathers to the Roman power, used by the divine Spirit for this end; and the second withholding (*ο καταχων αχριως εκ μου γωμται*) to the more direct restraint of insubordination and lawlessness by the same Spirit, which he will at length righteously give up. The first, the Man of Sin, I think has fully been proved to apply to Popery; the second, the Lawless One, applies to the speedily to be developed Antichrist. In various other parts of the New Testament we find the same growth of evil marked. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 1—3, with 2 Tim. iii. 1—9: 2 Peter ii. 1—9, with v. 10—22.)

In viewing Antichrist **GENERALLY**, or in spirit, I consider it descriptive especially of Popery and Mahomedanism.

There has been much discussion, whether **THE NAME OF ANTICHRIST** be **JUSTLY ASCRIBED TO POPERY**; and whether the Man of Sin (2 Thess. ii.) be also rightly ascribed to Popery. The author is convinced that the great corruption of Christianity in Popery, has, in its whole spirit, the distinguishing marks of an apostacy, and is properly called Antichrist. It was the general sentiment of the fathers, that *what withholdeth*, (2 Thess. ii. 6.) referred to the restraining power of

the then Roman dominion,* and [165] when that was removed, Antichrist would be revealed, and this removal clearly made way for the establishment of Papal usurpations. *The mystery of iniquity* worked in the days of the apostles, so that St. John says, *even now there are many antichrists*. The whole tendency of Popery is adapted in every part to set aside the Father in his love, and the Son in his humanity, mediation, grace, and offices. 1 John ii. 18, 22. The worship of the Virgin Mary is a virtual denial of the coming in the flesh of our Lord Jesus, and leads men to view Christ only as a severe Lord and Judge. The system of masses is a practical denial of the Lord having bought us. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Their assumption of power over kings is setting themselves above all that is called God. Ps. lxxxii. 6; John x. 34; 2 Thess. ii. 4. The name antichrist seems most scripturally to be given to that apostacy. Thus the apostle calls, (Heb. ix. 7,) the succession of High Priests, the High Priest; and (2 John 7.) many deceivers, *ο αντιχριστος*, the antichrist, and so justifies the ascription of the name, to many and successive individuals. The reformer, Bernard Gilpin, thus argued (assuming Babylon and Antichrist to be the same,) "If the pope be antichrist, I see not only probable, but even necessary causes to depart from the Popish church. But if the pope be not antichrist, I see no sufficient ground for such a departure. It is not lawful to make a separation from the church. But we are not only enjoined to come out of the church of antichrist, but we see the fearful anger of the living God, and hear his dreadful threats thundered out against those who shall remain [166] in Babylon, that synagogue of antichrist. Rev. xvii. and xviii.†

It will be clear, from the expressions of St. John, *Ye have heard that the antichrist shall come*, (1 John ii. 18.) that the name refers to an opposition to Christ, which had been previously foretold; and hence the ancients generally connected various prophecies in the Psalms, in Daniel, and in St. Paul's epistles, as well as in the Revelation, with antichrist. But the application of any particular prophecy, which is, or has been supposed to be, descriptive of POPERY, to that apostacy, must rest on the just interpretation of that prophecy, and its connection with other prophecies, and not on the verbal term antichrist, which occurs only in the epistles of St. John; the words of St. John, describing antichrist, being so general, as to lead us to

* See Tertullian, Chrysostom, Jerome, &c. There are valuable notes on this subject in Fulke's Testament, on 2 Thess. ii. Cyprian calls all heretics "the precurors of that one and special antichrist which is to come at the last end of the world."

† Bishop Carleton's Life.

give the name to whatever opposes Christ: especially may we apply it to the system of Popery which has perverted the gospel of Christ for so long a period, virtually subverts his main doctrines, and sets aside his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, while it professes to hold them. Satan is here especially *transformed into an angel of light*, 2 Cor. xi. 14, supplants the truth by lies, and corrupts by flatteries, and does by consequence deny the only God and Father.*

[167] It has been noticed already, that some modern writers on prophecy (whose powers of mind, established piety, and acuteness of remark, are such as to entitle their works to consideration) have endeavoured to set aside the Protestant application of the Man of Sin to Popery, and Babylon to Papal Rome. The author has read some of these works, he hopes not without edification, from their practical character; nor without increase of caution in the views which he holds, but with no conviction that they have overturned the great mass of argument by which the Protestant church had established that application. When we consider how explicitly our God has begun and closed, (Rev. i. 3; xxii. 7,) the book of Revelation with a blessing, promised to those who read and hear the words of that prophecy, it is surely improbable that the general result to which Protestant writers have, for several centuries, with a great unanimity, come, should be erroneous. The expressions of the apostle, (twice also repeated, Rev. i. 1; xxii. 6,) lead us to think, that what he foretold would begin *shortly to come to pass*. God greatly honoured this view as a mighty means of confirming the Reformers, supporting them at the stake, and thereby extending the blessed Reformation. Cressener, in his valuable works, has shewn that Roman Catholic writers themselves furnish many testimonies [168] strengthening the Protestant application of leading parts of these prophecies to Rome. As it is very improbable that the church should be left to struggle through eighteen centuries of conflict, darkness and sorrow, without such a lamp as the Reve-

* The author cannot forbear quoting the following extracts (from Quiroga's Index, Lib. Expurgat. published in 1601) of gospel truths to be obliterated in a book of Anselm's entitled *Ordo Baptizandi cum modo visitandi*.

Fol. 34, ad medium deleantur illa verba. "Credis non propriis meritis, sed passionis domini nostri Jesu Christi virtute et merito, ad gloriam pervenire?"

Ibid: paulo post, deleantur illa verba. "Credis quod dominus noster Jesus Christus pro nostra salute mortuus sit; et quod ex propriis meritis, vel alio modo nullus possit salvari nisi in merito passionis ipsius?"

Fol. 35, in ultima linea deleantur illa verba. "Non erit desperandum, vel dubitandum de salute illius, qui supra positas petitiones corde crediderit, et ore confessus fuerit."

What an explicit denial of Christ is there here! Bonaventura's Psalter applied to the Virgin (which has been republished at least as late as 1823, at Rouen,) shews a similar denial of the Father.

lation, giving a light on its path, (yet allowedly a feeble light, shining in a dark place, 2 Peter i. 19,) so, in point of fact, devoted Christians, during those centuries, from age to age, have found great support and comfort from the rays of light which this book shed on their course.

It is, however, an advantage to be led to reconsider the ground on which the Protestant interpretation rests, and fresh light will be thrown, not only on fulfilled, but also on unfulfilled prophecy. In this view the works of such writers may be eminently useful. But whatever farther fulfilment may take place in the close of this mystery of iniquity, and in its final destruction, the past fulfilment, in many leading particulars, has been such as to satisfy a large body of the Reformed church of Christ.

And let not the Romanist, nor the Infidel, glory over Protestants, in their divisions of sentiment. What truth is there that occasions not divisions, and the word of God, under the teaching of the Spirit, is the guide, and the only infallible guide to that truth. What sentiment does the Romanist hold peculiar to his creed, on which there have not been divisions in his church? What human science is the infidel acquainted with, respecting which there are not varied opinions? Nor let the true Christian be discouraged by these divisions. Every doctrine which we hold, from the debasing fall of man, to the glorious mystery of the Trinity, has occasioned almost endless [169] discussion and differences: but the truth is worth struggling for through all these difficulties, in patient meditation upon the scriptures, in fervent prayer, and in diligent study of the works of those who love the truth, wherever it is to be found. A Christian will be thankful to any one who will help him to discover *the truth of God*. And let him not be easily shaken out of the truth, when he has once got it; *Buy the truth, and sell it not.** Prov. xxiii. 23.

The grounds on which the Protestant church have come to its conclusion have been so often discussed and are so ably

* May the Author be forgiven for the following practical remarks. Greatly is it to be desired, that in all the discussions between Christian brethren, on the very difficult subject of unfulfilled prophecy, not only that any sarcasms, severe reflections, and bitter retorts, but that any thing like self-complacent satisfaction in our own views, fancied superior discernment, and greater skill in argument, and all undervaluing the sentiments of others, should be avoided. The absence of the expressions of Christian humility and love, even where real love is not absent, is painful. Let not earnest contention for our own interpretation of prophecy, in our own spirit, be mistaken for *contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. It is easier, however, to see what is wrong in others, than to avoid it in ourselves; and where a system that has cost us years of lengthened study and patient investigation to work out, and has commended itself to many, is opposed by new views, with much plausibility and acuteness, it must be peculiarly trying to our Christian graces, in

stated by those who have discussed it, that it is vain to attempt to go over the reasons for this application again; especially where there is little fresh to offer, after what has been said by Reformers generally, and the varied writers of the Protestant church who take this view, such as Mede, More Cressener, Bishop Newton, Hurd, Halifax, Cuninghame, &c. Mede's remark may govern us [170] here: "Though I can reasonably well persuade myself of many things I believe, yet had I never so much confidence in me, as to be able to persuade another man of a contrary judgment, if he were once studied and settled therein; which made me so unwilling at the first to enter the lists with you in this kind, where I could expect no other fruit, but the loss of much time and pains to no purpose. The wit of man is able, where it is persuaded, to find shifts and answers, until the day of doom, as appears in so differing opinions held amongst Christians, with so much endless pertinacity on both sides. It is sufficient, therefore, for a man to propound his opinion with the strongest evidence and arguments he can, and so leave it. Truth will be justified of her children. But these reciprocations of discourse in writing, wherein you place so much benefit for discovery of truth, I have often heard and seen truth lost thereby, but seldom or never found."*

In the British Magazine there are some letters of Bishop Horsley's, striking from his bold and forcible style, rather than conclusive from the weight of his arguments. He inveighs against Mede's Interpretation, and calls it "an unwarrantable, monstrous supposition that Christian Rome is Antichrist." The very term Antichrist may be delusive, as being a general rather than a particular term; but that Rome is the Man of Sin and Babylon of Revelation, has, I still think, been proved by the writers above named. The history of Popery has been such as to shew that the very spirit of Antichrist was, in a long series of ages, remarkably developed in its whole [171] system; and this has been proved at very great length by Protestant writers of every age since the Reformation.†

answering the objections, to answer them with the *meekness and gentleness of Christ*. May our God give his spirit more and more to writers and readers, *with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*.

* See Mede's Works, p. 748, 749.

† The publications establishing the Protestant view of Antichrist are very numerous. It is the general interpretation of the Protestant commentators on the Scripture. (See Commentaries.) Gualtar, Frith, Danæus, Fox, Whitaker, Fulke, Downname, Abbott, Beard, Maresius, (who answers Grotius taking another view,) Keach, Halifax, Hurd, Cuninghame, as well as the more general statements of Mede, Warburton, Bishop Newton, &c. &c. may be con-

The author has given, in his Tract on "The Progress of Popery," the testimonies of the churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the British Government, and the testimonies of our Reformers, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Bradford, Jewell, Hooper, Frith, Tindale, and Fulke: he has also given testimonies of the Albigenses and Waldenses, and of the Foreign Reformers, Luther, Zuinglius, Melancthon, Calvin, Æcolampadius, Martyr, and Musculus. The subject is so important that he adds here, in a note, a few additional witnesses. Those BEFORE THE REFORMATION are necessarily limited, the Pope having then nearly complete power to suppress all testimony. But it will be seen that they are not without considerable weight. It is curious to see that the Protestant advocates had difficulties to contend with in Papal opponents, similar to those with which we have now to contend in Protestants. *

sulted. But for one wishing to come shortly to the conclusion, the Roman Missal, and the Decrees, and Canons, and Catechism of the Council of Trent, compared with 1 Tim. 3; 2 Thess. ii.; and Rev. xiii. xvii., will furnish ample evidence.

* Bishop Jewell in his Defence of the Apology thus sums up the testimony of the Fathers.

"But to come near the matter, and to speak of the thing that most misliketh you—St. John saith—'*Antichrist shall sit in a city built upon seven hills,*' (and so is the city of Rome.) Irenæus saith: '*The number of Antichrist's name shall be expressed by this word, Latinus,*' whereby it is likely is meant the Bishop of Rome. Sybilla saith: '*The greatest terror and fury of his empire, and the greatest woe that he shall work, shall be by the banks of Tiber.*' And there is Rome. These circumstances seem plainly to point out the city of Rome. St. Hierome saith: '*Antichristus sedebet in templo Dei, vel Hierosolymis, ut quidam putant, vel in Ecclesia, ut verius arbitramur.*' Antichrist *shall sit in the temple of God, either at Jerusalem, as some think, or else in the church (of God) itself, which we take to be the true meaning.* St. Gregory saith: '*Ego fidenter dico, quod quisquis se Universalem Sacerdotem vocat, vel vocari desiderat, in elatione sua, Antichristum præcurrit.*' *I speak it boldly, whosoever calleth himself the Universal Priest, or desireth so to be called (as doth the Pope) in the pride of his heart, he is the forerunner of Antichrist.*

"And when John, the Bishop of Constantinople, had first entered his claim unto this title, St. Gregory made answer unto the same: '*Ex hac ejus superbia quid aliud, nisi propinqua jam esse Antichristi tempora designatur?*' *By this pride of his, what thing else is signified, but that the time of Antichrist is even at hand.*

"Again he saith, upon occasion of the same: '*Rex Superbiæ propè est, et, quod dici nefas est, sacerdotum est præparatus exercitus.*' *The King of Pride (that is Antichrist) is coming to us, and an army of priests is prepared, which thing is wicked to be spoken.* St. Jerome saith: '*Antichristus omnem Religionem suæ subiciet potestati.*' *Antichrist shall cause all religion to be subject to his power.*

"I will not here take upon me to descry either the person or the dwelling-place of Antichrist. Whoso hath eyes to see, let him see. These circumstances agree not unto many. St. Paul saith: '*Antichrist worketh the mystery or secret practice of iniquity.*' Whereupon the Gloss saith: '*Mystica est impietas Antichristi, id est, Pietatis nomine palliata.*' *The wickedness of Antichrist is mystical, that is to say, (it is not plain and open, or easy to be espied of every body, but) cloaked under the name of goodness.* And your Gloss upon St. Paul unto Timothy saith thus: '*Habentes speciem Pietatis, id est, Christi-*

[172] Though the national protest and testimony, in our country was greatly weakened by the Roman Catholic [173] Relief Bill, yet even that bill requires that before voting, the members of both houses swear that [174] "they will never exercise any privilege, to which thy are, or may become enti-

anæ Religionis.' *Having a show of godliness, that is to say, a show of the religion of Christ.* So mystical shall Antichrist be in all his dealing. And forasmuch as M. Harding thinketh that we misallege these writers, and violently force them to our side, whether they will or no, St. Bernard saith thus: 'Bestia illa de Apocalypsi, cui datum est os loquens blasphemias, et bellum gerere cum sanctis, Petri Cathedram occupat, tanquam Leo paratus, ad predam; *The Beast that is spoken of in the book of Revelations, unto which Beast is given a mouth to speak blasphemies, and to keep war against the saints of God,* is now gotten into Peter's chair, as a lion prepared to his prey. Behold, Mr. Harding, St. Bernard telleth you, that Antichrist is possessed of Peter's chair. Howbeit ye may soon find a salve for this sore. For ye will say, "Bernard wrote these words against Petrus Luna, an intruder and usurper of the see of Rome, and not against Innocentus VII. that was pope indeed." This is true, M. Harding, and not denied, nor any way prejudicial to our purpose: for hereby ye may see, by Bernard's judgment, it is not impossible, but either by election, or by intrusion, by one way or by other, Antichrist may sit in Peter's chair. Mark well his words: thus he saith: "Bestia habens os loquens blasphemias occupat Cathedram Petri." But if you, M. Harding, or any other friends, shall hope to start out of this poor hole; what will you then say unto Arnulphius that saith, "The very pope himself, notwithstanding any, his canonical election, if he want charity, is Antichrist sitting in the temple of God!" What will you say to Bernard himself, that calleth the popes of his time, traitors, wolves, Pilates, devils, and the darkness of the world? Tell not your friends, M. Harding, that Bernard speaketh these words of intruders. This shift will not serve. He speaketh them of very popes indeed, of Christ's vicars, of Peter's successors, and of the heads of the church. Joachimus Abbas said, above three hundred years since: "Antichristus jampridem natus est Romæ et altius se extollet in sede apostolica." *Antichrist is already born in Rome, and shall advance himself higher in the Apostolic See.*

Arnulphius in the council of Remes saith thus: "Quid hunc reverendi Patres, in sublimi Solio residentem, veste purpurea, et aurea radiantem, quid hunc, inquam esse censetis? Nimirum, si charitate destituitur, solaque scientia inflatur, et extollitur, antichristus est in Templo Dei sedens, et sese ostendens, tanquam sit Deus: What think you, reverend Fathers, of this man (he meaneth the pope) sitting on high in his throne, glittering in purple, and cloth of gold? What think you him to be? Verily, if he be void of charity, and be blown up and advanced only with knowledge, then he is antichrist sitting in the temple of God, and shewing out himself as if he were God. The bishops in the council at Reinspurgh say thus: 'Hildebrandus Papa sub specie Religionis jecit Fundamenta Antichristi.' Pope Hildebrand under a colour of holiness (by forbidding priests' marriage) hath laid the foundation for Antichrist. Dante, an Italian poet, by express words called Rome the Whore of Babylon. Franciscus Petrarcha likewise saith: "Rome is the Whore of Babylon, the Mother of Idolatry and Fornication, the Sanctuary of Heresy, and the School of Error." I know these words will seem odious unto many. Wherefore I will stay, and spare the rest. The Pope himself, for that he saw to whose person and credit these things belonged, therefore, in his late council of Lateran gave straight commandment to all preachers, that no man should dare once to speak of the coming of Antichrist."

Thus striking is the testimony gathered by Bishop Jewell even before the Reformation. The whole address of Arnulph, is given by the Magdeburgh Centuriators, cen. x. p. 263. In one part he breaks out: "O lugenda Roma! quæ nostris majoribus clara Patram lmina præbuit; nostris temporibus, monstrosas tenebras, futuro seculo famosas, fudisti."

ted, to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion or Protestant government in the United Kingdom;" and they abjure also any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment. That Establishment, in the English Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, and in the Scotch Confession of Faith, and the Irish Articles, furnishes a living protest against the Antichristian spirit of Popery. **BRITAIN STILL THEN YET HAS A NATIONAL TESTIMONY AGAINST POPERY AS ANTICHRIST.** May the Lord enable us to maintain this testimony to his truth, and thus may the Protestant Church of Britain ever concur with the testimonies of the Protestant churches at large. Some of these testimonies are given from the Confessions of Faith in the note below.*

* *Confession of Saxony.*

After reciting many of the errors of Popery, it is said—"These things, seeing they be altogether heathenish and **IDOLATROUS**, it is manifest that the maintainers thereof are not members of the church, but rule and have sovereignty, as the Pharisees and Sadducees did."

Confession of Augsburgh:—

"Our adversaries would not have the **IDOLATRY** of the Mass, nor praying to the dead spoken against, because they cannot bear that their gain should decrease.

The French Reformed Church, in their acts at the Synod of Gap, in 1603, directed the following article to be inserted in their confession of faith.

"Whereas the bishop of Rome has erected for himself a temporal monarchy in the Christian world, and usurping a sovereign authority and lordship over all churches and pastors, exalts himself to that degree of insolence, as to be called God, and will be adored, arrogating to himself all power in heaven and earth; and to dispose of all ecclesiastical matters, to define articles of faith, to authorize and expound at his pleasure the Sacred Scriptures, and to buy and sell the souls of men—to dispense with vows, oaths, and covenants, and to institute new ordinances of religious worship. And in the civil state he tramples under foot all lawful authority of magistrates, setting up and putting down kings, disposing of kings, and of their kingdoms at his pleasure. We therefore believe and maintain that he is truly and properly *the Antichrist, the Son of perdition*, predicted by the holy Prophets,—that great whore clothed with scarlet, sitting upon seven mountains in that great city which had dominion over the kings of the earth; and we hope and wait that the Lord, according to his promise, and as he hath already begun, will confound him by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming."—See Quick's Synodicon, vol. i. 226, 227.

The article offending the French Government, *the printing* of it was superseded—Daillé, however, the moderator of the Synod, in 1659, told the king's commissioner, "As for those words *Antichrist*, in our Liturgy, and *idolatry* and *deceits of Satan*, which are found in our Confession, they be words declaring the grounds and reasons of our separation from the Romish Church; and doctrines which our fathers maintained in the worst of times, and which we are fully resolved as they, through the aid of divine grace, never to abandon, but to keep faithfully and inviolably to the last gasp."—Vol. ii. 513.

The Synod of Gap stated, "That this was the common faith and confession of all our churches, and of this present Synod—and one of the principal causes of our separation from the church of Rome; and that this confession was contained in and extracted out of the Holy Scriptures, and had been sealed with the blood of a world of martyrs. Therefore all the faithful, be they pastors or private Christians, are exhorted constantly to persist in the profession of it, and openly and boldly to confess it." Vol. i. 231.

[175] However, in some countries, particularly in our own, Popery may be making an outward shew of [176] progress, its real dominancy, wealth, and influence, appears to be declining into infidelity. The state of things in France, Spain, and Portugal, and on the continent generally, shews this abundantly.*

While the Reformers universally applied Antichrist to the Pope, and Babylon to Rome, it appears from Fox's Book of Martyrs,† that several of the predictions which we now more generally applied to Popery (such as 2 Thess. ii.; Rev. xiii. 18,) were applied by him also to the Turks, and the rise and course of MAHOMEDANISM, and he questions whether Turk or Pope is the greater Antichrist. In the general view which St. John gives of the term Antichrist, it indeed well includes, in its spiritual character, Mahomedanism, which *denieth the Father and the Son*. He denies the Father under the pretence of honouring his unity, denying his revealed glory, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and he denies the Son, by asserting that "Jesus is no other than a servant whom God favoured with the gift of prophecy," (see Koran, chap. xliii.); and explicitly rejecting his Godhead, (see Koran, chap. 5 and 9,) and putting in his place an impostor and false prophet. [177] Other prophecies clearly set before us the destructive ravages and awful extent

Bohemian.

"That mischievous and wicked Antichrist shall sit in the temple of God, to wit, in the church; of whom the prophets, Christ our Lord, and the apostles have foretold us, and warned us to take heed of him, that the simple sort among the faithful might avoid him, and not suffer themselves to be seduced by him. Now in Antichrist we are to acknowledge a double perverseness—to wit, dishonesty and deceiving. The first is a perverseness of the mind, or meaning, or a bringing in of false doctrine clean contrary to the meaning of Christ our Lord and of the Holy Scripture, whereof the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; 2 Peter ii. The other evil or offence we are to consider in Antichrist is, a corrupt and naughty life, giving unto others a very ill example, and is full of horrible sins, hurtful filthiness, and all kind of vices which in the Antichristian church are openly practised, and that freely without any kind of punishment. 2 Tim. iii. 1—5; Matt. xxiv. 10—13."

Belgian.

"The FALSE church doth always attribute more to herself, to her own decrees and traditions, than to the word of God, and will not suffer herself to be subject to the yoke of Christ, neither administers the sacraments so as Christ has prescribed, but at her own will and pleasure adds to and detracts from them. She always leans more to men than to Christ, and whoso leads a holy life, according to the rule of God's word, whoso rebukes and reproves her faults, as her covetousness and IDOLATRY, those she persecutes with a deadly hatred."

* "The bill for the sale of church property in Portugal has passed into a law. The amount of the national and church property together, which is thus to be disposed of, is calculated at considerably more than twelve millions sterling. Such a dilapidation of the funds of the Romish church has had already, it is said, a sensible effect on the revenues of the Romish see, since both Spain and Portugal, long the most faithful of its supporters, have also been the largest contributors to the Papal coffers."—*Record*, June 1, 1835.

† See his full account of the Turks, p. 675—710.

of this apostacy, in the very seat of those countries where Christianity arose in its primitive beauty. Daniel viii. 9—25; Rev. ix. The wasting of this power in our day is very striking.

The spirit of Antichrist is to be found working its way to its last consummation by INFIDELITY in Protestant, as well as Papal and Mahomedan lands. It is greatly to be feared that the infidel form of Antichrist is now the prevailing form, and that among all classes of Christians. The Roman, the Eastern, and the Protestant churches, in all their varied divisions, however reformed externally, have all the mark of the last days, *the form of godliness without the power. They who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*, are a little flock in the midst of the world opposed to him, whatever the creed professed by that world may be. The wheat and the tares are every where growing together. It is not the nominal Christian, whether high church or Evangelical, Dissenting or Established, Reformed or Lutheran, Romanist or Greek, that does by his name and profession exclude Antichrist; we must carefully mark the spirit of Antichrist, as given in the scriptures, and come out and be separate from it, wherever or under whatever names it exist. In some professions of Christianity it seems externally embodied, and faithfulness requires an outward as well as an inward separation, (Rev. xviii. 4.) as in Papal if not in Eastern churches.*

[178] The growth of this spirit of infidelity, driven by degrees, in the last days, out of all the refuges which Satan has

* The symptoms of growing infidelity become too apparent in our country, by our public and national proceedings. On May 31, 1836, one of our leaders is reported to have said, "The more religion governed their hearts, and the less it directed their hands, the better:" and on the following day, another of our public leaders is reported to have said: "An ecclesiastical establishment was not instituted for the propagation of a doctrine but for the instruction of the people." The self-contradiction of each of these statements in themselves is evident, and the effect of both in union is to remove altogether both Christian practice and Christian principle from the world. The maintainance of Papal bishops and clergy in our colonies, and the various government measures favouring Popery, bring the nation into the false position of blessing and cursing, proceeding out of the same mouth. The Socialists, or avowed Atheists, are rapidly spreading through our own land, as similarly-minded men are on the continent. Oh how painful was it to observe at the Queen's Levee, held June 26, 1839, that leader of the Infidel school—Robert Owen, presented to her Majesty, from the Congress of the Delegates of the Universal Community Society of National Religionists, soliciting the government to appoint parties to investigate measures which the congress proposes, to ameliorate the 'condition' of society!!! Blessed be God that he is giving to his people also a greater simplicity in testifying to his truth. The elements of the three parts into which the great city is to be divided (Rev. xvi. 19.) seem forming in our leading parties: 1. Those who fear God above every thing. 2. Those who would preserve things as they are as far as possible. 3. And those who would change every thing to bring about their own fancied improvements, apart from God and his will. The first, though now the smallest, is the only safe, happy, and ultimately triumphant party, for a Christian to join with all his heart and soul.

been inventing for 1800 years, will probably issue in the PARTICULAR OF PERSONAL ANTICHRIST, an avowed and open opposition to the Lord; the Man of Sin in his fulness, and gathering under his banner all that wickedness which has hitherto been working in secret.

We see now how infidels and Papists have united together; liberals contributing to the erection of Roman Catholic chapels, schools, and nunneries; Roman Catholics, with the added strength of liberals, ejecting the Bible from the schools, and seeking to divert the property of the Established Church to other purposes, and to remove remaining vestiges of our national acknowledgment of Christ.

[179] Abroad Popery unites with infidelity as well as with despotism, to accomplish its objects. The Paris correspondent of the Record, March 12, 1836, says, "The whole liberal and radical press seems no longer to object to the restoration of the Papal power, now that the Pope's Belgian, Irish, and lastly French policy, indicates a transference of confidence on the part of his holiness, from crowned heads to the democracy and its leaders."

Every where we see an open advance in the expressions of infidelity. The growth of piety will more and more call forth the enmity of Satan, and that enmity will become more marked and more vivid, till it assumes its last shape and its highest rage. *The ten horns, or kingdoms of the Roman empire, shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* This seems to imply the progress in that wasting of Papal dominance and wealth, which we now witness, till it be exhausted. We are also told that *the ten horns have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast* (Antichrist in his last form). "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings. Rev. xvii. 13—16.

The author sees then considerable ground for the opinion entertained by some, that there may yet take place a heading up, as it were, of the Prophecies in these last days; a concentrated and combined exhibition of the apostacy, of short continuance, under avowed INFIDELITY, in a more glaring and blasphemous defiance of God, and possibly under some individual person, and accompanied with bitter [180] sufferings of the church.* After these statements let us say, however, with

* The author gives the following extract of a letter from the able correspondent of the Record, dated Paris, Oct. 2, 1838.

"So utterly in fact has the Christian faith been abjured in this country that an Editor of one of the most popular journals here, and a distinguished author, declared to me a few days ago, in conversation, that he was strongly of opi-

Irenæus, "it is more certain, and without danger, to wait the fulfilment of the prophecy, than to guess at it." Whether there be any farther exhibition of Antichrist or not, the very uncertainty leads us still to be in the posture of looking and waiting for our Lord's coming.

In the mean while our duties are perfectly clear, to come out of the Antichrist already exhibited, whether in its more open manifestations of Popery and of infidelity; or in its more subtle workings of *a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*. 2 Tim. iii. 5. The spirit of antichrist is in the natural heart of all men: we are all opposed to entire self-renunciation, simple dependence on the righteousness and strength of our divine Redeemer, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and hearty confidence and trust in the love of our heavenly Father, and devotedness to him, and it is dislike [181] to these things that is the root of Antichrist: we have therefore within our own hearts the very seeds of Antichrist.

May we also be prepared for whatever assaults and temptations may yet come upon the church, in these last days, so as to be faithful to our divine Lord. May we pray much for grace to *stand fast in the Lord*, a direction given by the apostle in immediate connection with looking for the Saviour. Phil. iii. 20, 21; iv. 1.)

The final destruction of Antichrist, and of all opponents of the Lord Christ at his coming, is the burden of many a prophecy through the sacred volume, and is made palpably clear in the apostolic statement, "Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. ii. 8.

nion that the world was travailing to the production of a new religion, which would finally abolish Christianity. I told him that I agreed with him thus far: that new doctrines, which might be called a new religion, might at no distant time overspread many nations to such an extent as to blot out over wide tracts all who believe in the Christian Revelation; but that far from looking forward to the consummation with hope as a promise of good to mankind, I anticipated it with the utmost horror, as the most dreadful darkness and delusion that could fall upon the human race. 'Oh! then,' said he, 'I perceive you are a believer in that absurd fable about Antichrist?' 'And you also,' I replied; 'the religion which you have described and which you tell me you are expecting—what is but Antichrist?' I relate to you this anecdote, because it affords a striking example of the utter ignominy into which Christianity has fallen in the estimation of highly intellectual, and in every worldly sense respectable Frenchmen."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF TIME.

[182] The scriptures distinguish between time in the reckoning of man, and time in the account of God, and it is very important in the interpretation of prophecy to keep this distinction in view. Thus Psalm xc. 4, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday." We are especially charged, "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day, (2 Peter iii. 8.) There are set before us *man's day*, ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας (1 Cor. iv. 3.) comprehending the whole period of the absence of our Lord; *the day of salvation*, (2 Cor. vi. 2.) the present season of grace; *the day of vengeance* (Isa. lxiii. 4.) a period of wrath; and *the day of the Lord*, (1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14.) comprehending a period yet to come, when our Lord shall be manifested. There is also *the day of eternity*, ἡμέραν αἰωνος, (2 Peter iii. 18.) Thus, in God's reckoning of days, Adam died in body, as well as by immediate spiritual death, on the day in which he sinned; nor has any son of Adam ever reached that one thousand years in man's reckoning, which is but as [183] one day in the view of God. This very first threatening in the Bible may lead us to see that there is a deeper view of time than appears on the surface, and we may get into a false literalness by confining God's words in one part to the letter, without taking in view those further discoveries of his will which shew a fuller meaning and design.

It is manifestly God's purpose, with regard to some of his predictions, that the period of their accomplishment should, at the time they were given, be in a great degree hidden. There were many wise and holy ends in this, especially that the church might be kept in a waiting, hoping posture. It could not have been profitable to have had them opened till the time of the end. Daniel xii. 9. Besides this, *knowledge* was then to be increased. ver. 4. We may then presume that a mystery was to be unfolded. Our Lord himself, when expressly asked by the apostles, declines telling them then those times and seasons (Acts i. 6.) which the Father had put in his own power. St. Peter, alluding apparently to Daniel's inquiry, "What shall be the end of these things?" (Dan. xii. 8.) says, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently . . . what, or what

manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify to whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you." 1 Peter i. 10, 11. The answer given to Daniel illustrates this. Dan. xii. 9—13. The prediction was explained in some measure, but still sealed up—so that hereafter there would only be needed the unfolding of the truth already given.

The times mentioned in the Book of Daniel are as follows:—

[184] 1. *Seven times*, (Dan. iv. 16.) which were to pass over Nebuchadnezzar, when he was driven from men and a *beast's* heart was given to him. As Nebuchadnezzar is expressly called the head of gold, this seems plainly to denote the season during which the Gentile dominion of the four monarchies should be corrupt and worldly, as afterwards exhibited in the four beasts coming up from the sea.

2. *Time, times, and dividing of times*, (Dan. vii. 25; xii. 7.) This is the half of the larger period.

3. *Two thousand three hundred*, a numeral which stands by itself and might be equally applied to days or years, since the term evening and morning appears to apply to the whole, when compared with the reference made to it at the close of the chapter. Dan. viii. 14, 26.

4. *Seventy weeks, seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, and the dividing of a week*; where the term week in itself may denote days or years. Dan. ix. 24.

5. *A thousand two hundred and ninety days*. Dan. xii. 11.

6. *The thousand, three hundred, and five and thirty days*. Dan. xii. 12.

The terms in the first four instances are in themselves quite ambiguous and general. There is nothing to determine, respecting the number 2300, and the seventy weeks, whether years or days be intended; but analogy would lead us to suppose that all were to be interpreted on a common principle.

In the law we have many analogies which may help us in the interpretation. We have six days followed by a sabbath day, and six years followed by a sabbatic year of rest, (Lev. xxv. 4); seven sabbaths were to be numbered from the Passover, [185] and the fiftieth day was the feast of Pentecost, and seven sabbaths of years, and then the fifty years a Jubilee year. Lev. xxv. 8, 9. The spies searched the land forty days in unbelief, and a penalty of forty years wandering in the wilderness was inflicted, *a day for a year*. Numb. xiv. 34. Ezekiel was ordered to lie on his side 390 days to bear the 390 years iniquity of Israel, and forty days for the forty years iniquity of Judah, *each day for a year*. Ezekiel iv. 5, 6. The *seventy sevens* of

Daniel are by common consent, weeks of years. The period of 2300 consists of two parts, one of the daily sacrifice, restored in part, and the other of desolation, and it is so connected with the seventy sevens as to lead us to interpret both of years.

The word *year* *etoc* in symbolical prophecy seems purposely avoided, till the close of revelation, and *time* given instead, to shew us it is not a mere year. The days are also reckoned in a way quite unusual when days exceed the length of a year, if only literal days were meant: 1,260 instead of three years and a half; 2,300 instead of six years and so many days.

The *seven times* have a correspondence with the three times and a half, being their double; now the latter terminate with the kingdom of Christ, and the former seem evidently to commence with the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, and to denote the whole season of the bestial debasement of the corrupt Gentile kingdoms. The seven times would then answer to the times of the Gentiles mentioned by our Lord, (Luke xxi. 24.) and the latter three and a half to the latter times mentioned. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

It appears from Dan. xii. 7, that the close of the three times and a half is closely connected with the [186] gathering of the Jews; and from Zech. i. 18—21. that the power of the four Gentile monarchies is then broken: and this confirms the extended meaning of both. God looks at the whole course of this world's history as but a few days.

Daniel, when he heard the period of the times and a half announced by the angel, understood not, and on inquiry received the answer, *The words are sealed to the time of the end*: and an intimation is given that even when unsealed, only *the wise would understand*. We thus learn that the meaning couched under this expression was purposely concealed for a time, but was afterwards to be unfolded to the wise. The promise is not of a fresh revelation, but of an explanation of a period already given. And there seems to have been a wise end in this veiling of the time, as it would have been staggering to the faith, and deadening to the hopes of the Israelites, if the whole of the interval had been openly and explicitly declared.

The last chapter of Daniel compared with the tenth of Revelation, gives a still clearer warrant for the enlarged or Protestant interpretation of the times. The prophet writes thus: "And one said to the man clothed in linen which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river: when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth

for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go [187] thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." It is here plainly implied that at the time of the end, the words should be unsealed. Have we then any guide to teach when this unsealing should begin? The tenth of Revelation supplies this. There the angel of the covenant, who had appeared in the vision to Daniel, appears afresh with a little book *open* in his hand. He repeats the solemn oath, but with the marked variation *that there shall be time no longer*, but he then gives the book to the apostle to eat, as a token of the insight into its meaning, now granted, (Amos ii. 7. Ezekiel ii. 8; iii. 10.) and then adds the commission, "Thou must prophesy afresh before many people, and nations, and tongues and kings." Now to what season does this refer? It immediately follows the two woe trumpets of the ninth chapter; and these so clearly relate to those two scourges of the church, the Saracens and the Turks, that they have been the great land-marks in which almost every interpreter has agreed, however widely their schemes have diverged in other respects. The vision of the tenth chapter must, therefore, relate to the time of the Reformation, the next great event of history, and accordingly from that period the unsealing began, and the enlarged meaning of the prophetic times was unfolded to the church of God.*

Other intimations are given us in the scriptures that may lead us to the same view of a day, in symbolical prophecies, pointing out a year.

Our Lord told Herod, "I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected," [188] (Luke xiii. 32,) where he seems clearly to refer to years. The ten days of Smyrna's tribulation have been, with strong reason, referred to the ten years of persecution under Diocletian, immediately before the exaltation of the church.

It is allowed that the evidence is not of a nature to convince an unwilling or captious mind. The Lord frequently does not give that evidence on very important facts and doctrines. But there is evidence that is weighty and important,—and, may I not add, satisfactory to a mind humbled to receive truth in the way in which it pleases the Lord to give it, and willing and glad to *discern the signs of the times*. We greatly need the en-

* The period of three times and a half, and its variously expressed meaning as 1260 days and 42 months are mentioned in Revelation, but the periods of 1290 and 1335 are not mentioned.

larged mind of God, to whom all things are present, in forming a judgment of times and purposes revealed by him *who inhabiteth eternity*. A moral preparation is stated as a requisite, in the expression, *none of the wicked shall understand*.*

[189] A merely mechanical settling of dates in accuracy of numbers has a very injurious effect on the mind—but a moral and spiritual view of the times, arising from an enlarged perception of God's mind and glory, and the victories of his truth and love over all evil, and in harmony with all his revealed character, is exceeding profitable to the soul. A mechanical system will be found often to clash with other parts of truth; but the spiritual view is both edifying and harmonizes with all truth. An exact knowledge of the times does not appear to be designed; but a general knowledge of times, taking us out of an endless uncertainty, may be looked for in the use of means.

It has been noticed that there are many wise and holy ends connected with the concealment of the time. Its being given under mystical periods was essential to its concealment. This is an instance of that general truth, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John xvi. 12. There

* The author has read with some care the objections that have been made, as far as he had an opportunity of seeing them, to the interpretation which would make a prophetic day to signify a year; especially those of Mr. Maitland and the late Bishop Horsley; but he abides by the long maintained exposition of the chief Protestant expositors of Prophecy, and of some in the Jewish as well as the Christian church, that in the prophecies, the time of the fulfilment of which was not intended to be made clear to those to whom they were delivered—a day means a year. But he has been led to think it probable that there may be a concentrated farther literal fulfilment, in part, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, according to the general expectation of the Fathers. Some of the reasons why a mystical number is used, are given above. He refers to the writings of Mede, Faber, Holmes, Cuninghame, and others, for farther proofs of this. The time of the commencement of the æra is more hidden in obscurity.

Some remarks of Benglius may remove difficulties in our minds, as to the consideration of dates. He observes, in his Gnomon on Rev. i. 3. "There are some who, through unquiet curiosity, miserably handle this most holy book; whence others, falling into an opposite extreme, hear unwillingly even the name Apocalypse, which ought of itself to allure them, and mistrust the book itself from the singular number of rash interpretations and conjectures void of truth. Hence, while they wish to know all things, they reject the knowledge of those only which the Lord declares will come to pass, and account the attempt to discover the truth a weariness; sloth to be modesty; silence to be prudence; and care for and enquire into any thing sooner than this, as if it had been written, Blessed is he that readeth not, and they that hear not, &c. Let them beware, lest while they invent all excuses for refusing the heavenly gift, they weary God (Isa. vii. 12, 13.) and be found THANKLESS toward Jesus Christ. Nay, blessed is he that readeth, and they who hear and keep, especially in our times, which, as we shall see, border, upon a great change. It is better in searching out the times, if only faith, hope, and love rule in the heart, to attempt to the utmost, and to be ridiculed, than with the freethinkers in this world, to despise warnings as paradoxes, and be crushed by the events."

is an extent of light and truth which would be prejudicial to us, and confound by its very brightness. The church was not in a prepared state when Daniel [190] wrote, nor when the Revelation was given, for the full discovery of the times. We see Daniel earnestly inquiring for further light. It is in a measure given; and then he is content with that measure. We see the apostles asking the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and they are still told, "the Father hath put in his own power the times and seasons;" and content with this, they enter on their arduous work. The hiddenness is good, while we so perfectly know the times and seasons, that we are looking for the Lord as a thief in the night. But when, in the lapse of the ages, *in the time of the end*, as Daniel speaks, or, as Peter speaks, *in the last days, when scoffers* rise up, and say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* and the servants of the Lord are saying, *My Lord delayeth his coming*; then the Lord has provided that the words shall be unclosed and unsealed. Dan. xii. 4, 9.

We may learn hence the duty of searching to the utmost, as the prophets did, what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify; (1 Peter i. 11,) yet still remembering that the great object of such a knowledge is practical, and refers to preparedness for the day of the Lord. 1 Thess. v. 1, 2.

The first command with a threatening, was, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Where knowledge is kept from us, hid under divine mysteries, let us abstain; where it is given to us, let us use it to the utmost.

But great humility is essential in all scriptural studies. *The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.* It may be well supposed that the last book of scripture (Revelation) is the most [191] deep, instructive, sublime, and mysterious; as all God's works and ways rise in beauty and glory, from their beginning to their close. Need we wonder, then, at mistakes in the study of that book, and imperfect elucidations of its wonderful contents: especially if there be either the spirit of lurking unbelief, or the pride of systematic human wisdom.

How little could the church of God, or Daniel himself, have borne all the development of the history of his people, had the the desolation of 2520 years been openly revealed! How little could the primitive Christians have borne such a delay of their hopes, as 1800 years have manifested! but the Lord has done all things well, in mercifully veiling the trials of his church, and giving more and more light as the time of glory draws nearer.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRONOLOGICAL PROPHECIES.

[192] Chronological Prophecies have an important use. Though they may not be designed to enable us absolutely to fix the precise time in which such prophecies shall be accomplished, yet they are manifestly intended to guide the church in looking out and preparing for the event predicted. It was thus that Daniel, in the first year of the reign of Darius, understood the accomplishment of the seventy years' captivity, (Daniel ix.) and thus the devout Jews were waiting for the first coming of Christ. Luke ii. 25, 38.

It would be a grievous error in the church to disregard such prophecies. Because many in past ages have made serious mistakes respecting the dates, we must not, therefore, in the spirit of infidelity, refuse to consider them, as if they were full of danger and evil. The mistakes of others should lead us to more caution, and diligence, and prayer, in our researches, and more diffidence in our conclusions. But having now the advantage of a more lengthened manifestation of God's mind, from the past history [193] of the church, we have with this, greater light for the true interpretation. Because men, hundreds of years back, said, the coming of Christ was near to them, do not let us now say it cannot be near to us. The rolling away of 1800 years must have brought it much nearer. Because they anticipated the event before the time, do not think it will not come suddenly, and cannot be at the doors, and that it is not your duty to look for it and expect it.

Oh unhappy perversion of preceding mistakes! by which Satan gains this immense advantage; that wise and holy, that cautious and good men, are brought into a state either of neglect of that word of prophecy, which is a *light shining in a dark place until the day dawn*, and to which God HAS EXPRESSLY COMMANDED US TO TAKE HEED; or of hampering it with such rules as almost to shut out the study from the general body of the church. Oh, deep design of Satan! by which he accomplishes that predicted dangerous state of men in general, before the day of the Lord come: "as a snare shall it come on *all* them that dwell on the face of the *whole* earth," Luke xxi. 35. "When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth," Luke xviii. 8. Let us not be "ignorant

of his devices," 2 Cor. ii. 11. How perfectly contrary is this to the mind of the holy prophets! 1 Peter i. 10, 11.

The first prophetic period brought before us in the scriptures, is 120 years, (Gen. vi. 3,) when "once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah:" (1 Peter iii. 20,) the more affecting to us in these last days, as the world then was, in general unbelief and worldliness, in a similar state to that in which it is to be before the coming of Christ. Luke xvii. [194] 26, 27. Matt. xxiv. 37—39. Boothroyd's translation of the passage in Genesis is striking, Jehovah said, "My Spirit shall never pronounce judgment on men unwarned. They are but flesh. Their days therefore shall yet be 120 years.

Many of the predictions of scripture have a mark attached to them, of the time in which they were to be fulfilled. Such are the 430 and 400 years of the Israelites being in Egypt. Gen. xv. 13; Exod. xii. 40. The 65 years predicted by Isaiah, in which Israel was to be broken. Isa. vii. 8. The 70 years of Judah's captivity. Jer. xxix. 10. The 70 weeks, or 490 years, in which Messiah was to be cut off. Dan. ix. 24, 25. The 2300 days or years, at the end of which the sanctuary is to be cleansed, and no longer trodden under foot. Dan. viii. 14. The period of 1260 days or years, of the dominion of the papal power, predicted under the varied terms of time, and times, and half a time, (Dan. vii. 25. Rev. xii. 14;) 42 months, (Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5.) or 1260 days, (Rev. xi. 3, and xii. 6); the father periods of 30 days and 45 days, included in the 1290 and 1235 days or years. Dan. xii. 11, 12. The mystical period of an hour, a day, a month, and a year, which is interpreted either as 396 years, or as 391 years and a month, or as 390 years by those who consider the hour and day as denoting rather the season than a specific part of the time, has had several different dates assigned for its commencement: this period is reckoned by Mr. Habershon from the capture of Constantinople, when artillery was used (Rev. ix. 17.) with such success by Mahummud II. in 1453; the termination of the Turkish woe would thus be brought down to 1844, or 1843.

[195] One of the most important chronological prophecies is that of the 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL. The interpretation which most satisfies the author's mind from its simplicity, and following the order of the text, is this—The 70 weeks of v. 24, is a definite period of 490 years ecclesiastically complete, from the decree of Artaxerxes given to Ezra, 458, to the death and resurrection of our Lord in A. D. 33, which makes exactly 490 years. The period from which this era is to be reckoned, is to be gathered from the vision (v. 23.) of which it is the explanation. In that vision Daniel asks the question,

(viii. 13, 14.) "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" and he is answered, "unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The first renewing of the sacrifice, as we find, (Ezra vii. 12—23.) was under the decree of Artaxerxes, 458 years before Christ. That decree was directly connected with the building of the temple and the restoration of worship and the sacrifices. Of the whole period of 2300 years, *70 weeks of years were determined* *והנבואה* or *cut off*, from the restoration of the daily sacrifice to the completing of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, when the spiritual temple was raised up, (John ii. 19—21.) and the most holy was anointed. Heb. i. 9; ix. 24. We have here then the ecclesiastical period of 70 weeks, or 490 years distinct and perfect. There is another period of seventy weeks, however, brought before us in verses 25, 26, and 27. As the 70 years' captivity had a double commencement, from the first captivity to the decree of Cyrus; and from the second captivity under Zedekiah to the decree of [196] Darius: so this longer period of 70 weeks appears to have a double commencement. The second commencement is stated to be from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. The date of Nehemiah's commission from Artaxerxes was 446. But it appears very clearly that the period mentioned by Daniel is to be reckoned in complete weeks and not in parts of weeks; hence as in the period of our Lord's burial, parts of time are reckoned for the whole. The commencement of a perfect week therefore, in that course of weeks which had begun to run with Ezra's commission must be taken, or the year 451. There are three periods, (1) seven weeks, (2) sixty-two weeks, (3) one week. From 451 to A. C. 33 is just 483 years, or 69 weeks. For 7 weeks or 49 of those years, constituting a jubilee, (a sacred measure of time,) there are predicted, *troublous times*, as we may judge by the history of Nehemiah there really were, till the Jewish polity was settled. This seems to be one reason mentioned for the separation of the first seven weeks from the 62; though it is probable there may be other reasons. Then follow the sixty-two weeks which will reach till A. D. 33, when the Messiah was to be cut off, and (as it is in the margin) the Jews were to be no more his people. We have then, in v. 26, an indefinite period, the events of which are, the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans, and the Jewish desolation. This desolation was to last, as we learn by other prophecies, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Matt. xxiii. 38; Luke xxi. 24. In v. 27, we have

the additional week at the close of the times of the Gentiles when the people of Israel are again taken into covenant as pointed out, Ezek. [197] xx. 33—38; Rom. xi. 25—27. This week is divided into two parts. The character of the first half week seems to be set out, Isaiah lxvi. 1—3, where the Jews are represented as, in a self-righteous spirit, re-building the temple and offering sacrifices; and the character of the second half or *dividing of the week*, answers to Isaiah lxvi. 4—6, where they are represented as under the terror of the infidel Antichrist, who causes the sacrifice to cease; and at the close is the consummation in the destruction of that Antichrist, as set before us. Isaiah x. 23—25; 2 Thess. ii. 8.

There is a period called by our Lord, THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES. On this Mede remarks, "I make no question but these "times of the Gentiles," (Luke xxi. 24,) with which the Jews' tribulation shall end, are either the times of the four monarchies in general (that is the times of that prophesied dominion of the Gentiles; or, which is all one in event, those last times of the fourth kingdom, of *a time, times, and half a time*, at the fulfilling whereof Daniel prophesies of the same appearing and coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, (Dan. vii. 13, 22,) as St. Luke does in Luke xxi. 27."* The period of a time, Mede has shewn, signifies a year, and times two years, and half a time half a year: the Jewish year consisting of 360 days; three years and a half make 1260 days. The grounds have been already stated which justify the large body of Christian interpreters, in considering the prophetic day to intend a year, and viewing 1260 days as 1260 years. But three prophetic times and a half are but the half of the whole Jewish dispersion. There is a remarkable prediction of [198] their troubles for their sins, in Lev. xxvi. in which they are told again and again (see verses 18, 21, 24, 28), that they shall be chastened *seven times*, or sevenfold, for their sins. The frequent repetition of seven times, or sevenfold, connected with their lengthened suffering under the Gentile monarchies, seems to point out a special design, and may intimate the length of time which these chastisements should last. It would make, interpreted as we do the times in Daniel, a period of 2520 years, from their being carried into captivity. The same period of *seven times* or 2520 years is brought out, as has been noticed, in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. These times were to pass over that king (who seems a type of the Gentile nations) in a state of bestial derangement, and after them he was to be restored. Dan. iv. 25. Possibly if these times are connected with cycles, they

* See Mede, 753.

denote a period something shorter, as 360 days are less than the length of a natural year, or the *seven times* may be current only. But if reckoned as 2520 years, they would terminate earlier, or later, according as we reckoned the commencement of the captivity of Israel, or of Judah. If we reckon the captivity of Israel as commencing in 727 before Christ, Israel's first captivity under Shalmanezzer, it would terminate in 1793, when the French Revolution broke out: and if 677 before Christ, at their captivity under Esarhaddon (the same period when Manasseh, king of Judah was carried into captivity, 2 Kings xvii. 23, 24. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11,) it would terminate in 1843. These periods may have a reference to corresponding events at their termination, and are worthy of serious attention.*

[199] The whole of this period of seven times, as it regards those countries with which the church of God has been connected, has been marked by the prevalence of four empires. Mr. Mede, in his *Apostacy of the latter times*, has remarked—“For the true account of times in the scripture we must have recourse to that SACRED CALENDAR AND GREAT ALMANAC OF PROPHECY, the four Kingdoms of Daniel, which are a prophetic chronology of times measured by the succession of four principal kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel until the mystery of God should be finished; a course of time during which the church and nation of the Jews, together with those whom, by reason of their unbelief in Christ, God should surrogate in their room, were to remain under bondage of the Gentiles and oppression of Gentilism; but those times once finished, *all the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ*: and to this great calendar of times, together with that other, but lesser calendar of seventy weeks, all mention of times in the scripture seems to have reference.” A Jewish Rabbi, Saadiah Gaon, in the tenth century, stated, on Dan. vii. 48:—“Because Israel had rebelled against the Lord, their kingdom shall be taken from them and given to these four monarchies, which shall possess the kingdom in this age, and shall lead captive and subdue Israel to themselves in this age, until the future age, when Messiah shall reign.” See Mede's Works, p. 536.

The four kingdoms are, 1. *Babylonian*, Dan. ii. 32, 38. 2. *Medes and Persians*, Dan. ii. 39; v. 26—28. 3. *Grecian*, Dan. viii. 20, 21. See 2 Mac. ii. 1—4.* [200] 4. *Roman*, John xi.

* See Habershon on the Prophecies, for many valuable observations on this subject.

† Some have supposed that the Grecian empire did not fulfil the predicted description of Dan. ii. 39; the account given of it in 2 Mac. ii. 1—4, in the author's view removes this difficulty.

48; xix. 15. It might at first sight be supposed that the ten kingdoms should be formed out of the whole Roman empire, both eastern and western. The reason why it is not so, is thus stated by Sir I. Newton, in his remarks on the prediction of Dan. vii. 11, 12. "The rest of the beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and time." "The four beasts are still alive, though the dominion of the three first be taken away. The nations of Chaldea and Assyria are still the first beast; those of India and Persia are still the second beast; those of Macedon, Greece and Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, are still the third; and those of Europe on this side Greece, are still the fourth. Seeing, therefore, the body of the third beast is confined to the nations on this side the river Euphrates, and the body of the fourth beast is confined to the nations on this side of Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast among the nations on this side of the river Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns of the fourth beast among the nations on this side of Greece. And, therefore, at the breaking of the Greek empire into four kingdoms of the Greeks, we include no part of the Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians in those kingdoms, because they belong to the bodies of the two first beasts. Nor do we reckon the Greek empire seated at Constantinople, among the horns of the fourth beast, because it belonged to the body of the third."

In the raising up of Greece to a distinct kingdom in our day, we may now see in Turkey, Persia, [201] Greece, and the ten European kingdoms, all these empires in existence.

The inquiry then comes, What are these ten kingdoms? Dr. Cresséner has observed that "the number *ten* is usually taken in scripture for an uncertain multitude of those things of which it is said to be the number; and in such a long succession and change of kingdoms as it is here joined with, and where there is no other circumstance to shew it to be a definite number, it ought in all reason to be taken in that sense; that is, for an uncertain multitude of kingdoms that were to be set up with the beast in the bounds of the Roman empire."* The reason is hardly satisfactory, and it is hoped that more certain light may yet be attained on this point.

It is singular that Machiavel, a professed member of the church of Rome, has given a list of the Gothic tribes which overthrew the Roman empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, making them ten in number.† It is painful also to us, of this long-favoured land, to find that Britain is included in almost

* See Cressener's *Demonstration of the Apocalypse*, page 244.

† See Chandler's *Vindication of the Defence of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 246—265.

every list of the chief interpreters of Revelation, (as Mede, Lloyd, Sir I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Hales, Cuninghame, &c.) among these ten kingdoms.*

[202] The following are considered by some as the ten kingdoms as they now subsist. 1. Ravenna. 2. Lombardy. 3. Rome. 4. Naples. 5. Sardinia. 6. France. 7. Austria. 8. Spain. 9. Portugal. 10. Britain. Another list gives these:—1. Rome, with Ravenna and Lombardy. 2. France. 3. Spain. 4. Portugal. 5. Savoy. 6. Naples. 7. Austria. 8. Bavaria. 9. Venice. 10. Tuscany. If Rome be considered as an 11th horn, Hungary, part of which at least was included in the Roman empire, might be added. In the natural animal, horns plucked up may grow again; and so the place of the three horns plucked up before the 11th, may be supplied by fresh kingdoms, which seems proved by the number being 10 at the close, Rev. xvii. 16, 17. The term in Dan. ii. 43, of *the iron mixed with the miry clay*, explained, “they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron was not mixed with clay,” may have been given to prepare us for the difficulty of identifying distinctly ten kingdoms, though that has generally been about the number.

The author confesses that he is not fully satisfied with any list yet given; he trusts that the farther investigation [203] of students may throw more light on this important part of prophecy. On the lists as might be expected, there are different opinions—some being left out, and others added; and if ten be not a definite number, we cannot expect a concurrence of view. The symbolizing and uniting with Popery and its issue, infidelity, is the darkest mark for any nation which has once been a part of the Western Roman empire. In every case, the moral

* Prophetical writers have differed in opinion whether Britain be included among the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire. From the expressions—*They receive power as Kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast*; it has been concluded, that as Britain, before the rise of Popery, was separated from the Roman Empire, and did not become papal at the beginning of Popery, and separated from it at the Reformation, it cannot be among the ten kingdoms. See the Christian Guardians for 1830, p. 135, and Whiterby, p. 79 to 88. Rejoiced, indeed, would a British Christian patriot be, to see his country not included in the last judgments on the Roman Empire. Daniel ii. 35; vii. 11. But it has seemed to some interpreters of Revelation, that there are changes in the Roman Empire revealed under the terms Dragon and beast; Rome Pagan, ch. xii., Rome Papal, ch. xiii., and a third in chapter xvii., which may be called Rome Papal, Infidel, Republican. The differences of the beasts of ch. xiii. and xvii. are distinctly pointed out by Woodhouse, p. 359, 360. It is in the last form that the ten kingdoms *have one mind with the beast*, and are cast into perdition, and no time is allotted for the duration of this beast. If it be so, what an argument is here furnished for contending with Papacy, and Infidelity, and Lawlessness, the three evils of the last days! See Mr. Cuninghame’s remarks on the last form of the Roman Empire, in his Dissertation, page 446 and 493. The state of our country cannot but occasion much anxiety.

and spiritual character of a country, is that which will really decide its state in the day of the Lord.

In the description of **THE FOURTH BEAST**, as given by St. John, in the Revelation, the beast is said to have seven heads, and these are interpreted to mean *the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth*, and that *there are seven kings, of which five are fallen, and one is, and the other is yet to come*. The confirmation of the application of this to Rome by the unconscious testimony of Pagan poets and historians, is very striking.* The grouping together of the first five heads removes all objections from the irregularity of order in which they rose, and fell, and rose again. By this grouping of the five together, the order is not more marked in the prophecy than it was in the history. The five forms of government, according to the Roman historians, were *Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs, Dictators, and Tribunes*. The *Imperial Government* was the one existing at the time of the apostle.

The importance of these prophecies to us, will be [204] more clearly seen when it is known that these ten kingdoms are to be destroyed at the coming of Christ, (Dan. ii. 44, 45; Rev. xvii.—xix.); and that it is during their continuance that he appears in the clouds to establish his own kingdom on their ruin, (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, and 27, 28; Rev. xix. 11;) his being the sole kingdom then left, (Dan. vii. 27, 28; Rev. xi. 15; xx.—xxii.)

The termination of the times of the Gentiles is also the more important, as it is so continually represented to us as the time of the separation of the wicked from faithful professors. Look in this view at the parables of the tares and wheat; the net cast into the sea, the ten virgins and the talents. See the striking statements of our Lord, Luke xvii. 26—30, and of his Apostles, 1 Thess. iv. 15—18; v. 1—11. 2 Thess. i. 5—10 and ii. The author was long satisfied to refer these to the general judgment after the Millennium, but a more full consideration of scripture leads him to think that the whole of the scriptural testimony can only be harmonized by applying them to a separation to take place previous to the Millennium.

When shall these things take place? Who can answer this? The precise time is probably yet hidden from us; but *the signs of the times* are to be discerned, and the approach of the time may be expected to be known, as was the time of the first ad-

* The Testimony, as given by Cressener, in his Demonstration, to the title of Rome as the seven hill'd city, includes Varro, Virgil, Ovid, Propertius, Martial, and Lucan; (see page 9;) and as to the five forms of government, it includes the two principal historians, Tacitus and Livy, Cassiodorus in his Chronicon, and Onuphrius Panvicinus. See page 135, 136.

vent to Simeon, Anna, and others. Sir Isaac Newton, in his day, speaks of the time approaching, but adds (page 252) "the time is not yet come for understanding these prophecies perfectly, because the main revolution predicted in them is not yet come to pass." It has appeared to many that the French Revolution, [205] in 1793, is that main revolution which meets these anticipations.

On the COMMENCEMENT OF THE 1260 YEARS, there are considerable differences of opinion amongst Protestant interpreters. The most common modern opinion (that of Mr. Cuninghame, Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Frere, and Mr. Irving,) gives A. D. 533, the date of Justinian's Edict in favour of the Pope; Mr. Faber's commencement is 604; Bishop Newton's 727; and Lowman's 756. In the year 584 mentioned by Mr. Brown, Pope Pelagius claimed infallibility, and was assisted in maintaining it by the troops of the empire, and then Rome was abandoned by the eastern emperor. This period would terminate in 1844. The Magdeburgh Centuriators name the year 666 as the time when Pope Vitalian would have service in the church in Latin.

The year of our Lord 608, exactly 75 years after 533, is remarkable by the Pantheon being dedicated afresh to the Virgin Mary and other saints; and the same, or following year, Mahomet's preaching began. This date of 75 years is important, as being the interval (divided into two parts of 30 and 45 years) given by Daniel between the close of the 1260 years, and the years of blessedness. On this view the first term of 30 years terminated in 1822. The events which distinguished the year 1822 were the declaration of independence by the Greeks, and the restoration thus of the seat of the third empire to political power. The gospel was then also again preached to the Jews in Jerusalem.

In the author's view the most probable of the periods is that of the year 533, ending in the French Revolution. It tended to shake this, while there [206] was reason to think that part of Justinian's Letter in favour of the Pope was a forgery of the Romanists, as stated by Comber in his *Forgeries of the Councils*, p. 251. In the part which Comber admitted to be genuine there is much respect and honour given to the Pope; but not what could of itself be considered as putting the saints into his hands. But Mr. Cuninghame has, since this was written, investigated at some length the doubts thrown out by Comber, and has, I think, satisfactorily removed them. See his preface to the *Fulness of the Times*. Page 11—22.*

* The identifying of the Letters to the pope with the civil law, and embodying his primacy in that law, was a remarkable way of accrediting the

There are other expressions in Justinian's Novels, making the Pope pre-eminent, to which Comber has not alluded, (Nov. 131. ch. 2.) "Sancimus sanctissimum senioris Romæ Papam PRIMUM ESSE OMNIUM SACERDOTUM."* The passage in Daniel, on which the commencement of the 1260 years is chiefly founded, is thus translated by Wintle, "He shall speak [207] words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall presume to alter appointed seasons and the law which shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the division of a time." Daniel vii. 25. On which Mr. Wintle says, "Either the saints shall be subject to his power or, as seems more agreeable to the versions, his influence shall prevail over the solemnities of the law. Possibly both might be intended to be included in the usurpation."

From whatever dates we reckon, we cannot but consider that the time of the end is drawing near, and that awful events of judgment and of mercy are before us. The time of condemnation and salvation as concerns the professing Christian church at large, as well as each individual believer, is hastening on. This should lead every Christian, on his own part to special watchfulness; on the part of a perishing world to the utmost exertions and prayer; and on the part of the church and the world to come, to peculiar hope and gladness of heart. When these evil times are passed away, the day of millennial glory dawns on the world; (2 Peter i. 19.) or in the words of St. Paul, speaking of the loving-kindness of God, in choosing his people out of the world, God's purpose is "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." Ephes. i. 10.†

pope, and making prominent his dignity. Gibbon says, "The vain titles of the victories of Justinian, are crumbled in the dust, but the name of the legislator is inscribed on a fair and everlasting monument. Under his reign and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the CODE, the PANDECTS and the INSTITUTIONS, the public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into THE DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS OF EUROPE, and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations." They did indeed soon after they were published, fall into neglect and oblivion till about the year 1130; when a copy of the digests was found at Amalfi in Italy: which accident concurring with the policy of the Roman Ecclesiastics suddenly gave new vogue and authority to the civil law." See Encyclopædia Britannica on "Law." The novels are full of directions about Ecclesiastical matters, and the primacy over the Christian church through the Roman empire is given to the pope in the body of them.

* See Mr. Cuninghame's able statement on this subject, with the original extracts, in his Apocalypse, p. 260—273, and his reply to Mr. Faber, p. 27, &c., and his Fulness of Times.

† Bengelius observes in his Gnomon also, on Rev. x. 6:—

"There is a great doubting concerning these periods, and many say that
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[208] Connected with the subject of Chronological Prophecies is that of CYCLES and JUBILEES. It is striking that some chief Prophetical and Chronological dates should be Astronomical Cycles, as 1260 and 2300, and the difference between them 1040, the most perfect cycle known. The æras of Jubilees may also yet be found much to illustrate the Chronology of Prophecy. This subject has been brought forward by Mr. Cuninghame in several of his latter publications with much application and extended research. Difficulties and mistakes in so intricate and perplexed a subject may be expected; but though pushed too far, there is valuable thought in these works and the increasing importance of the subject fully justifies great attention to it.

The author in his Sermon before the European Missionary Society, published in his Occasional Works, has thus stated his view of the COURSE of events yet to take place.

The beginning of the day of the Lord seems to be the breaking up of the visible Gentile kingdoms and churches, (Rev. xvi. 19) on account of their apostacy and wickedness, by a series of desolating judgments [209] foretold distinctly in Dan. ii. 34, 35, and strengthened by the vision of the four beasts (Dan. vii.) as well as by many similar predictions. This is explicitly interpreted by the angel as pointing out Christ's *kingdom breaking in pieces all the previous kingdoms, and then standing for ever*. Here is the complete overthrow of Popery, Mahomedanism, Infidelity, and every opposing kingdom. This is *the time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time*, but the scriptures lead us to the hope that vast multitudes of the unevangelized Gentiles may be converted to Christ, (Rev. vii. 9—14.) and that the Jews shall be delivered (Dan. xii. 1.) in this eventful period.

When the times of the Gentiles are passing away (Rom. xi. 25—32. Luke xxi. 24, 25.) the Jews are visibly recalled into

nothing can be known before the accomplishment; by which the martyrs and witnesses of the truth, in the Reformation, and before and after, who relied on the Apocalypse, especially its thirteenth and seventeenth chapters, are forsaken; and the main fruit of the prophecy, in warning and guarding us against approaching evils, is made void. Certainly to unseal the Apocalypse, either all the events are required, or a good part, is sufficient. If the whole is necessary, the Apocalypse will never be understood before the end of the world; for events reach so far, and even into eternity itself. If a good part is sufficient, let us use that part, so as to measure future things by the past, and not rush into the midst of the events unprepared. He is *rash* who sleeps in the danger, not he who looks out beforehand. We ought not, indeed, to be so confident in fixing things to come, as not to leave those to be explained by the event which the text has not defined, or, at least, the interpreter does not yet distinctly see. But those who avoid everything special, are ignorant what to observe, even in the events themselves. Spiritual docility and sobriety agree well with each other."

the church of God (Dan. ix. 27; Ezek. xx. 32—44; Isa. xlix. 9—12; lxii. 1.)—partake of his renewed favour,—are restored to their land (Ezek. xxxvi. 1—38; xxxvii. 20—23; Psalm xxxvii.; Isa. xi. 11, 12; lxii. 4; lx. 21; Jer. xxxi. 1—6; Gen. xiii. 14—18; xv. 18—21; xvii. 7, 8; xxvi. 3, 4; Exod. vi. 2—8; Lev. xxvi. 40—44; Deut. xxx. 4—6; xxxii. 43,)—and become peculiarly exposed to the wrath of the apostate Gentiles, who, under the last Antichrist, come against restored Israel. Isaiah lxvi. 1—4; Jer. xxx. 1—9; Isa. x. 20—27; Dan. ix. 27; Isa. xxxi. xxxiii. 1—10; Ezek. xxxviii. 1—16; Dan. xi. 41—45; Joel ii. 1—20; Mic. iv. 8—10; Dan. xii. 1, 2. Then the signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars are manifested. Mat. xxiv. 20—29; Luke xxi. 24—26; Heb. xii. 26—28; Hag. ii. 6, 7; Isa. xiii. 9—11; xxxiv. 1—4; Joel iii. 12—15; ii. 31, 32; Mal. iv. [210] 1—6. Soon the sign of the Son of Man himself appears in the heavens (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30; Luke xxi. 27, 28; Isa. xviii. 3—7; xi. 12—14; xxxi. 6—8; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Mat. xxiii. 39; Luke xvii. 24); he raises his dead, he changes his living saints; they rise to be with him in the air (Mat. xxiv. 31; Rev. xi. 15, 18; 1 Cor. xv. 51—54; 1 Thess. iv. 15—17; 2 Thess. i. 7; Isaiah xxvii. 12, 13; Rev. iii. 10; Isaiah xxvi. 19—21; Mal. iii. 17, 18); the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies gather together, in their rage, enmity, and blindness, to make war against the Lord, and the armies which follow him (Mat. xxiv. 30; Rev. xi. 18; xvi. 14; Isa. viii. 8—10; x. 24—26; xxiv. 21, 22; xxvii. 4; xxxi. 4; liv. 15; lxvi. 18; Joel iii. 1, 2; Mic. iv. 11—13; Zeph. iii. 9, 9; Zech. xii. 2—5; xiv. 1—5; Rev. xix. 19); he pours his judgments on Antichrist and his adherents, pleading with all flesh by fire and sword. Matt xxiv. 36—39; Rev. xv. 1; xvi. 1; Daniel ix. 27; Isa. x. 24, 26; xiv. 24—26; xxiv. 21—23; xxxiv.; lxiii.; Rev. xix. 10—21; Joel iii. 11—16; Nah. i. 9—15; Isaiah xxx. 27—33; Ezek. xxxviii. 17—23; Dan. vii. 9—14; Mal. iv. 1, 3; Matt. iii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 8; ii. 8; Rev. xix. 15, 20; Isaiah lxvi. 16; Rev. xix. The character of the dispensation is discriminating, punishing, and purifying. 1 Cor. iii. 12—15; Mal. iii. 3; Zech. xiii. 9; Mark ix. 42, 50; Jer. xx. 9; xxiii. 29; Psalm xcvi. 3; 1 Peter iv. 12; 2 Peter iii. 10—13; Rev. iii. 18. Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. The Jewish nation have a special promise of preservation. Isa. li. 16. The progress of that fire accomplishes the predicted *passing away of the heavens, melting of the elements*, [211] *and burning up of the works of the earth, in the day of the Lord*; but, like the Jewish tribulation, this fire seems to have a crisis in the beginning (Ezek. xxxviii. 22: xxxix. 6; Isa.

lxvi. 15, 16), and again a crisis at the close (Rev. xx. 9) of the millennial kingdom. (Matt. xxiv. 21; Luke xxi. 22—24; Daniel xii. 1; Jer. xxx. 7; Rev. xix. 20; xx. 9.) Soon the Lord descends visibly on Mount Olivet, with his glorified saints, (Acts i. 11; Zech. xiv. 4, 5; Isaiah lxiv. 1; lxvi. 15; lx. 13; Ezek. xliii. 7—9,) in the sight of his people Israel, (Isaiah lxvi. 18, 19; Zech. xii. 10—14; Isaiah xxv. 9; Matt. xxiii. 29; Rom. xi. 26; Isaiah lix. 20; Zech. ii. 10—12.) These, humbled at length by their great affliction, and brought to penitence by beholding their pierced Saviour, welcome his return. Zech. xii. 10—14; Jer. xxxi. 8—12; Acts iii. 19—21; Isaiah xii. 2, 4; Psalm cxvii. cxviii. xcviii.; Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6. Oh glorious consummation of the Divine patience and faithfulness! How amazing the riches of his loving-kindness to them! How fearful too his judgment, when his fire consumes his enemies! Satan is then bound, and our Lord, rewarding all his faithful followers for every loss and sacrifice made for him, begins his glorious millennial reign, with his saints over the earth, and over the nations who have escaped those awful judgments which have consumed his foes. Isaiah xxxii. 1; Dan. vii. 18, 27; xii. 4; Luke xxii. 28—30; John i. 51; Rev. xi. 18; xx. 4, 6. But, though the spiritual blessedness of this reign far exceeds that of any former dispensation, and the new heavens and earth begin in the heavenly reign of the saints, and the glory of the land of Israel (Isaiah lxv. 17—19,) yet the spirit of rebellion still secretly lurks among the [212] nations (Zech. xiv. 17—19), which, after ripening for a time, is at length permitted to display itself, by the loosing of Satan for a little season, that it may then be put down for ever. Rev. xx. 9. Our Lord reigns till he shall have completely put all enemies under his feet; Satan himself is cast into the lake of fire; the final judgment of all the dead takes place, and then death and hell, and whosoever is not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire. Rev. xx. 10—15. The new heavens and the new earth, being now perfected, and there being no more sea (Rev. xxi. 1.) the Holy City descends, and the happiest state arrives, when Christ surrenders the mediatorial kingdom, and *God is all in all*, and his saints *reign for ever and ever*. Rev. xxi. xxii. 5. These are some of the immensely important events which are connected with the coming of our Lord. Though the details of them may be more hid in obscurity, the events themselves are clearly revealed. And if these events are before the church and the world, they ought to be made known, that men every where may be awakened from their present slumber, and *flee from the wrath to come*.

In the close of this chapter it may be useful to refer the reader to CERTAIN SPECIFIC DATES which have been SUPPOSED TO BE NEAR THEIR CLOSE. The circumstance of so many scriptural dates having probable terminations about the same time, and the possibility that these terminations may be near, both calls for attention, and, in proportion as we see they have a real foundation, they are well calculated to impress our minds and increase our watchfulness. Yet the author would be far from dogmatising on such dates.

1,260 years.—Rev. xiii. 5.

[213] This date occurs frequently, and in three different forms. Dan. vii. 23—25, time, times, and dividing of a time, Rev. xii. 6, 1,260 days; Rev. xiii. 5, forty-two months. All, after the length of the Jewish year and month, point out 1,260. This date refers to the duration of Popery.

If we take its rise in 533 it reaches to 1793, when Popery began to fall; if we take its fuller establishment (Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 8.) in 608 to its final fall, it reaches 1868. The interval is 75 years.

666.—Rev. xiii. 18.

This, by the Lutheran expositors, has been considered as a name of date, as well as of person and character.

Three words seem specially intended to be set before us, as having Greek letters that make 666.

Λατῖνος.—The king who gave name to the Latin empire.

Ἀποστάτης.—The character of the power ruling it.

Ἡ λατίνη βασιλῖα.—The only Greek name of an empire among two or three thousand that has the number 666.

If taken as a *date*.—We have before 1,260 days, a date veiled under a mystery, and afterwards an explicit 1,000 years. In 666 the mystery begins to break: the number of a man counted by human reckoning.

If taken as a period both of rise and fall.—In its rise from 533—666 brings us to 1198—9, the time of Innocent III. Popery was then at its height, the inquisition was established, there was a crusade [214] against the Albigenses, and the number was applied by that Pope to Mahomedanism, as expected to be then near its end from the time of its rise.

From 1198—9, 666 brings us to 1864, just before Daniel's time of blessedness, leaving us only a period of half a week, mentioned in Daniel ix. 27, for the infidel persecution, from which the Philadelphian church was saved (Rev. iii. 10; xviii. 20,) but the Laodicean part left in it to be purified, and to be the last gathering of the church to the marriage supper.

2,300.—Dan. viii. 13.

There are two things in this number, the restoration of the daily sacrifice, and the time of desolation. The first, the restoration of the daily sacrifice, was to be determined, or rather cut off (חָסַד) Dan. ix. 24, from the 2,300 years to the completing of the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

If this 2,300 years be taken from Ezra's decree, 457 years before Christ, it will bring us to 1843, the beginning of the cleansing of the sanctuary, and of the restoration of the Jews, and of the approach of the great tribulation. If taken from Nehemiah's completed cleansing in 433—4, it will bring us to 1867—8, the completed Jewish restoration.

390.—Ezek. iv. 5; Rev. ix. 15.

This might be rendered (Rev. ix. 15,) The four angels prepared against (αἰ) the hour and day (the hour of judgment and the day of wrath,) were loosed for a month and a year (ἐνιαυτον), that is 390 years.*

If this 390 years commence in 1063, the beginning of the Turkish power, it will bring us to 1453, the height of their power in the fall of Constantinople. [215] And if taken onward, it will bring us to 1843, the time of the fall of the Turkish empire.

1,290 and 1335.—Dan. xii. 11, 12.

These years date from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up. This is connected also with the *time, times, and a half*, verse 7. It is the spiritual aspect of, and the counterpart to, the interruption of the temple service and the daily worship; or the rise of Popery in the Christian church, A. D. 533.

From 533, the period of 1290 would bring us to 1822, which is remarkable for the separation of Greece from Turkey; the pouring out of the sixth vial, and the preaching of the second advent.

From 533, the period of 1335 years would bring us to 1868, as *the commencement of the full blessedness of the earth*.

A time no longer, or not 360 years. (χρονος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι) Rev. x. 6.

The oath in Revelation is in many respects similar to that in Daniel xii. The speaker the same; shewn to be the Redeemer by the rainbow round his head and his face as the sun. It does not mean time should end—events occur after; and delay no longer; seems too vague: but, it may be taken there should be

* See addendum, page 440.

a time no longer, in the same sense as time, times, and a half. Formerly the angel had said, there were three times and a half, (Dan. xii. 7,) now not a single time. Rev. x. 6. This is quite in accordance with the spirit of prophecy, seeking to produce an impression of the nearness of the time. As soon as the times of the Gentiles are within the verge of one [216] time, lest men should think the end was indefinitely prolonged, the angel swears there shall be a time no longer.

The era of this chapter (Rev. x.) is supposed to be that of the Reformation. It follows the two woe trumpets of the Saracens and the Turks, and is the next great event of history. It was then that the little book, or the Bible, in contrast with the larger sealed book of all God's Providence, was first fully opened to the church, and light dawned upon Europe (his countenance as the sun).

If the date of the Reformation be 1517, a time, or 360 years, carries us to 1877, the period within which the mystery of God should be finished. This mystery is described in other parts of scripture. The mystery of the blindness of Israel, and the consequent reception of the Gentiles. Rom. xi. 25. The resurrection of the dead saints, and the change of the living saints, and their being caught up to Christ. 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17. The union of Jew and Gentile as fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of the promises in Christ. Ephes. iii. 4—9. The marriage union of the church to Christ. Ephes. v. 31, 32; Rev. xix. 7.

These events, the appearance of our Lord, and the first resurrection of the saints, would in this view take place within 360 years from the Reformation 1517, that is before 1877.

Mr. Clinton, one of the ablest chronologers of the present times, gives an additional period of 132 years to the interval in the time of the judges, on the ground of St. Paul's statement (Acts xiii. 20). If this be correct, it would bring the year 1864 to the close of the 6000th year of the world, or the 6th Millennium: 1864 is the date [217] when the 666 years close above, and assigned by Mr. Faber for the time of the end.

If these periods, (except the last, the close of which is less definite,) be correctly commenced, without fixing precise dates for each event, they point out that, within the next thirty years, Popery shall fall, the Jews shall be restored, the Turkish empire shall perish, the time of great tribulation will take place, our Lord Jesus Christ will return to our earth, the saints shall be raised, and the time of their full blessedness, and the kingdoms of this world becoming Christ's kingdom shall have arrived.*

* The time of the rise of the Papacy materially affects prophetic dates.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON VARIED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MORE OBSCURE
PROPHECIES.

[218] The subject of prophecy, in one important respect, is brought at present, in an unfavourable, not to say erroneous aspect, before the public mind. The mass of clear prophecy that has been remarkably fulfilled, is very great. This having been fully developed in former works, to the general satisfaction of men's minds, many modern authors have given comparatively little attention to the *plain* prophecies that have been *clearly* fulfilled; but chiefly discuss the more difficult predictions.

Hence a bystander may be ready to think that the whole subject of prophecy is full of nothing but difficulties; but the reading of such books as Keith's first work, and Bishop Newton's Dissertations, may shew that this is by no means the case, and that there is evidence, irresistible by a candid mind, of God's foreknowledge, and the inspiration of his word, in prophecies, unquestionably written long before the events took place, and already fulfilled in corresponding history.

[219] It is important, however, to remove this stumbling block from the differences of eminently pious and good men on obscurer prophecies, and to lessen the impediment which this presents to the pursuit of so deeply interesting and practical a subject. As it is greatly to be desired that these differences should never be discussed in a spirit that may pain a

The mystery of iniquity was even at work, we know, in the apostolic age (2 Thess. ii. 7; 3 John 9.), but Popish errors began to be sanctioned by authorities in the 6th and 7th centuries. Spanheim mentions these innovations *in the 6th century*; prayers to saints, public use of images, veneration of relics, purgatory, Litanies to the Virgin Mary, canon of mass. And *in the 7th century*; the dedication of the Pantheon to the saints; tonsure and celibacy of the clergy were commanded by Pope Martin, and the service in Latin by Vitalian; prayers for the dead and abstaining from meats.

Mr. Lathbury gives the following dates, as the times when Popish errors were made articles of faith by general councils.

| | | | |
|------|----------------------|------|--------------------|
| 700 | Invocation of saints | 1547 | Seven sacraments |
| 787 | Image worship | | Apocryphal books |
| 1076 | Infallibility | | Priestly intention |
| 1215 | Transubstantiation | 1563 | Sacrifice of mass |
| | Supremacy | | Venal sins |
| 1415 | Half Communion | | Indulgences. |
| 1438 | Purgatory | | |

Christian brother, or excite unholy feelings in his mind, so is it desirable also that they should not be unduly magnified; the effects of which will be to raise an insuperable obstacle to the study of prophecy, or to weaken that evidence of Divine inspiration which it has furnished, or to set aside the labours of learned and holy men, in which the Protestant church has rested for centuries.

There are some great points in which all who have deeply and seriously studied prophecy are agreed; and especially as to those great objects of prophecy, the near coming, in some way, of our Lord, (in which Mr. Faber is not an exception,) and the judgments connected with it, there is a remarkable uniformity of testimony among all the most diligent students of prophecy. Even where a spiritual Millennium only is expected, a coming distinguished by preceding judgments, and a subsequent blessedness, is anticipated. By some who deny a personal coming of Christ to reign for a thousand years, (as by our own Lightfoot, Bishop Hall, and Mr. Gipps, or the foreign divines, Mastricht, Turretine, and Markius,) the Millennium is supposed to be past, and the Saviour's coming to judgment, to be near. Where the Revelation is supposed to be fulfilled, (as by Mr. Burgh and Mr. Maitland) the Saviour's speedy coming is expected. Even where, as by Faber and Vint, a [220] personal premillennial coming is denied, an awful intermediate coming, in judgments on the wicked, and blessedness to the righteous, is declared. The voice of prophetic writers is here harmonious to a surprising extent. May these great truths then,—approaching awful judgments, and approaching incalculable mercies, attract the minds of Christians,—and lead all to the holiness, and spirituality, and blessedness of a waiting, prepared, and joyfully expecting state of mind: may we throw off all slumbers, and trim our lamps for that which the concurrent voice of Prophetic interpreters states to be near! *Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him..* Matt. xxv. 6.

The varied interpretations of Prophecy, and especially of the book of Revelation, it must be allowed, however, are, to careless or superficial observers, exceedingly distracting and confusing. Of the APOCALYPSE, some say nearly all has been fulfilled, some say none has been fulfilled; some give one part of the book, and others a totally distinct series, to the same facts. How shall we gain a guide to our path?

Let us remember that we are yet in the midst of God's dispensations; the building of his temple is not completed; the scaffolding is about a large part of it, the rubbish is not removed, many parts are unfinished, and those that are in a state of forwardness, want that entire completion which will show

their full and appropriate use, and their perfect beauty, when the magnificent temple is altogether complete and furnished.

Now the Revelation is a plan of this building in its varied parts, and in its completion: and human writers are not like the great Architect, who has all [221] in his mind; but like lookers-on, having indeed a hope of partaking hereafter of the worship, and obtaining a residence within the courts, but yet having little architectural skill to discover its state, and progress, and ultimate glory.

Let us then imagine these different lookers-on coming to this building from time to time in its progress. They have cast their eye over the plan; but perhaps cursorily, perhaps misled by false explanations, or confused by varied accounts of it, and thus they look on what has been doing in past years. To some it seems a heap of confusion; the ground broken up in all directions; heaps of soil in one part, of materials for building in another, a large and extensive erection indeed before them, but no beauty or harmonious proportion, and they say at once, this is not the building that our plan points out. Our temple is not yet begun.

Another looker-on comes, and gazing on a part that is advanced beyond the rest, and finding the floors laid, the windows in, and the rooms almost ready, and looking only at this part, he concludes at once the building is finished, the plan is completed, what can you expect more?

Another looker-on, surveying the rising edifice, comes to a part which he thinks he has satisfactorily made out, the very rooms described in one part of the plan seem before him; the very pillars, and length, and breadth of it, quite alike; but his neighbour who comes next, shews him something which throws considerable doubt upon this, and leads to a suspicion that the room he was looking at in the plan, is quite in another part of the building.

Another then comes, and says it is all too confused [222] for any thing definite to be made out,—why do you perplex yourself about it? An unbeliever gladly avails himself of this, to persuade men to disregard alike the designs of the architect, and the progress of the edifice, since their correspondence with each other cannot be identified.

This figure may illustrate the present states of mind in which many are regarding this book; yet must we “hear and read the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. Rev. i. 3.

The humble inquirer after truth, may, therefore, be perfectly assured of the infinite wisdom and ability of the great architect, and that the plan which he laid down is the best that can

be devised for his end: he may be assured also that the same mind which devised the plan and "gave it to shew unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass," (Rev. i. 1,) is constantly at work, accomplishing all the parts of his own design, and that it has really been going on through all the years that have elapsed since the plan was first given.

To ascertain farther what parts of the building have been erected, and what remains to be completed, will require much careful investigation, and a very slow, and patient, and long-continued search. It will not do to come at once to plausible conclusions, and because of a likeness in a few things conclude that there is a likeness in all. We must first endeavour to get a clear idea of the plan itself; and the way in which the architect proposed to proceed. We must then get a knowledge of the varied parts of the building, as far as it has already gone. And here we may perhaps mistake temporary sheds [223] and erections for more durable and solid parts. Our next step will be a most careful comparison between the parts built and the plan.

And then, remember, still our knowledge must yet be very imperfect, for the building itself is incomplete. Dogmatism, despising of others, fancied superior discernment do not become the looker-on. An architect would smile at the guesses which some apparently wise lookers-on make respecting an earthly building. *Patient waiting* (2 Thess. iii. 5.) is then a very important part of the wiser way: not careless, unconcerned waiting: for there is a glory about this temple that concerns every human being; and to partake of its glories and dwell in its courts for ever is the happy portion of those interested in it. What mark of wisdom is it to neglect it altogether, when the Lord of all has promised his blessing to those who duly attend to it? We shall find in so doing, many quickening motives to stir us up to gain a meetness for partaking in the everlasting worship of the temple above.

It is therefore an important duty here to be an inquirer after the truth, holding fast what is good, and patiently expecting the completion; gaining help from some, in the way of guarding against past mistakes, hints of parts already erected, and of parts yet to be completed, and from others, (like Mede and those who have availed themselves of his labours) in a general explanation of the whole system.

And after all, let us remember the infinite wisdom, the almighty power, the unsearchable riches, and inviolable fidelity of him who is carrying on his work till it be completed, and how little our wisdom is, and how certainly at length "he shall

bring forth the head-stone [224] thereof, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Zech. iv. 7.

The difficulties are indeed very needful, and very valuable in this view, to restrain the pride of man's wisdom, and to lay him in the dust. Man is compelled by irresistible evidence to believe that the plan is altogether divine and infinitely wise, and yet he is unable so minutely to explain it, as to give an unexceptionable view of the whole. This accords with all other parts of God's glorious works, and must at least shew him how ignorant and feeble his mind is, contrasted with the mind that formed the plan.

And the varying interpretations are all necessary and valuable, to bring out this truth distinctly and prominently. This will also doubtless lead on ultimately to the full discovery of the whole design. Those very interpretations which are the farthest from the truth, may serve, not only to keep up present attention to the prophecies, but also in the result to make the truth more bright and manifest, and to bring out parts of it which would otherwise be unnoticed. This effect has indeed already been in a measure accomplished, and thus no one who has in a serious spirit turned his attention to the subject, shall have laboured wholly in vain. All such researches, even where they have not led to a just view of the meaning, shall yet help to shew the wisdom of the Architect, and the completeness of his plan: and his servants will rejoice in his exaltation, though they be brought low." John iii. 30.

Another valuable end of difficulties in interpretation may be this;—the obscurities of prophecy keep it veiled both from the wicked, and from the righteous. [225] It is to be hid from *the wicked*, (Dan. xii. 10,) for many reasons. Though Jeremiah's divine inspiration was acknowledged, and his love to his country unquestionable; yet how was he misrepresented because of his plain predictions of the success of the Chaldeans! Had the statements of St. John, respecting the overthrow of the Roman empire, been plainer, the hatred of the Roman emperors against Christians might have been needlessly heightened, and Christians needlessly harassed. As it was, they attributed the decay of the empire to Christianity, and St. Augustine had to write his vast work, "The City of God," to set aside the false imputation. And as to *the true servants of Christ*, had the period of 1260 years of an afflicted state of the church been literally mentioned, or generally known till the time was nearly expired, it would have been impossible to fulfil the plain direction of a waiting and watchful spirit for our Lord's coming, when there was a certainty of such a lengthened previous tribulation.

Do not, then, be staggered and shaken at difficulties, nor let apparently weighty new views, entirely oversetting older schemes of interpretation, easily carry you away. Do not throw the study up, and say that it is perfectly vain to attempt to come to just conclusions; nor be easily turned aside from long-established sentiments.

God has wonderfully provided for a deep and continued interest being preserved in every part of prophecy, by giving to it that largeness of aspect which comprehends the whole of his dispensations, and will not be fully developed till they be ended. This, which occasions one part of its obscurity and the discussions upon it, does also serve to keep alive [226] men's attention to it, till the very end; and manifests therein the wisdom of the Father of Lights.

And the very discussions and differences are bringing into day-light hitherto hidden parts of the glories of God's truth. These things, with the progress of events, are all tending in the result to let in the full flood of broad day-light on that which has hitherto been little regarded, or viewed perhaps as obscure and unimportant.

It may assist us rightly to view these differences, if we can imagine the state of mind of God's servants in former days, respecting unfulfilled prophecies. The Israelites in bondage, in Egypt, lost sight of the promises made to Abraham, so that even when Moses was raised up, as their deliverer to accomplish them, "they hearkened not for anguish of spirit." *Exod. vi. 9.* We may easily suppose how little they credited the predictions given to Abraham, about his seed and the land of Canaan. The Jews in Babylon seem also generally to have disregarded the predictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, till Daniel was led to consider them and to pray: and then the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, probably by means of Daniel, to make proclamation in their favour, and raised the spirit of their chief fathers to go back. Through how many difficulties then had that partial return to struggle before they were established, and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had to strengthen the hands of Zerubbabel and Joshua against those who said, "the time is not come," (*Haggai i. 2,*) and to refer them to the words of *the former prophets*, (*Zech. vii. 7.*) There were differences of opinion, and yet the prediction was realized. The prophets themselves had great searchings, "what manner of time the [227] Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, (*1 Pet. i. 11.*) and we may suppose, though they had general views that were correct, yet, where uninspired, they could little distinguish the manner of fulfilment of many of the predictions.

To come down still later. In the time of our Lord, the chief priests and scribes knew where he would be born, (Matt. ii. 5, 6;) yet how little interest did they take about his birth, though their attention was so remarkably called to it. The Saviour lived among them for thirty years, little regarded by them. And, when he had wrought his wonderful works, and had suffered his appointed death; though the darkness and the earthquake for a moment astounded, they still viewed him as a *Deceiver*. We may suppose the chief priests, and scribes, and pharisees, and Gamaliel, and the lawyers consulting together, and saying, 'It is impossible the prophecies can be fulfilled: where is the glory predicted, and where is deliverance from our enemies?' Or we may suppose, after his death, even his Apostles conferring together; all the predictions of his remarkable birth, and life, and death, had been exactly fulfilled; they had been witnesses of these things, and their minds deeply engaged in them; and yet they then saw not their fulfilment; but their mind is expressed, "we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; Luke xxiv. 21. whatever different opinions and views there were among them of what had passed, doubts were not dispelled, till the Lord himself explained it to them. Luke xxiv. 44.

There may then be very great darkness on clearly fulfilled prophecy when our minds are under prejudices, and there may be differences among God's [228] children as to really fulfilled prophecy, and this may even continue till the Saviour himself come in his glory and dispel every doubt. Calvin distinguishes between the design of Prophecy, and the minute interpretation, (see his notes on Zech. i. 7—11,) and shews that if we are only desiring edification, it will be easy to collect the sum of the whole prophecy. It is easy to collect, for instance, the scope of the book of Revelation;—that it is given to discover to us the coming again, in power and great glory, of the Saviour, and till that coming, to shew to us a suffering and afflicted church; and after that coming a triumphant and blessed church. How inexpressibly important have these general truths been in all the ages of Christianity to the true servants of Christ!

The recent publication of views tending to overthrow all former interpretations, may be overruled for good, if it excite the interest of many who would otherwise wholly disregard the subject; and may lead to sifting to the utmost, all received views, and to the ultimate establishment of truth in the minds of those, who loving the truth, take diligent pains to search it out.

It is the more to be hoped that this may be the effect, as the

ability of those who have given forth these views is sufficient to enable them to detect every latent error; and their piety such as it is to be hoped will preserve them from willingly fighting against the truth. All sincere inquiries into prophecy are infinitely better than indifference.

Some instructive practical lessons may be drawn from these things:—

1. **THE DANGER OF DISBELIEVING PROPHECY.** This [229] unbelief damped the hopes of the Israelites in Egypt, and filled them with anguish of spirit; it made the Jews heartless to return from Babylon, and slack in building the temple. The Jewish rulers were, from disregard of prophecies, led to fill up their sins; and the Apostles were filled with despondency at their Master's leaving them, (John xvi. 6, 7,) though it was needful for their best advantage, that he should go away. Let us then, warned by so many varied examples, attend to this *sure light*, and ascend to this safe watch-tower, and wait for our Lord.

THE GRAND DANGER TO BE FEARED in these varied interpretations, is **A STATE OF SLUMBER**, as to the speedy, personal, and visible coming of Christ. Oh let us never forget, that not merely the foolish virgins slumbered, but **THE WISE VIRGINS** also! The tendency of all these differences of Christians is to deaden our faith in, and dull our hope of our Lord's coming, and to cause our love to wax cold. Any thing that has these direct effects upon our mind, cannot be the truth.

It is a just remark of Mr. Cuninghame's, that 'no mistakes of honest inquiries into prophetic truth are so fatal as the error of neglecting and despising the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus. Rev. xix. 10.'

2. Again, varied interpretation may lead us **NOT TOO PERTINACIOUSLY TO ADHERE TO VIEWS** which we have given to the public, should subsequent investigation throw doubt upon them. Whatever may be the correctness or incorrectness of Mr. Faber's last views, the candour and ingenuousness of mind with which he has been willing to adopt fresh sentiments, on a variety of points in which he thought [230] evidence compelled him to do so, is very remarkable and exemplary. In the same way, Mr. Cuninghame has acknowledged mistakes that have been manifested to him. Such acknowledgments are highly honourable to those who make them, and so far from leading any to triumph in their mistakes, should rather give us greater confidence that the writers are pursuing substantial truth, and not a mere private system; and lead us to copy a frankness truly Christian.

3. It is also important to be free from **DOGMATISM**, even

when on the strongest grounds we think that we are right. It is a large subject, full of serious difficulties, and spread over vast fields of God's word and God's providence; he then must be greatly blessed indeed in considering it, who is wholly free from mistake. When such men as Mede, Newton, Cressener, &c. have in some things erred, (and who will say they have not?) we ought surely not to be over-confident in our own interpretation.

4. Again, varied interpretations should excite us to increased and closer INVESTIGATION; the prophecy shall be so completed in the end of God's dispensation, that we may compare it with its accomplishment, and fulfil the direction, and attain the promise, "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read: no one of these shall fail; none shall want her mate." Isaiah xxxiv. 16. So far from giving up the study because of its difficulties, we should only search the scriptures more diligently. It is not so surrounded with difficulties but that patient investigation will clear away many, and open much invaluable light.

5. The end of all shall be the FULL TRIUMPH OF GOD'S OWN WORD, and of all who rest in it and obey [231] it. *The word of the Lord is tried*—it is pure truth, it shall stand for ever; things will clear up, difficulties vanish, and God's mind and will be fully developed and manifested.

A glory gilds the sacred page
Majestic as the sun;
It gives a light to every age;—
It gives, but borrows none.

6. SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL, however contrary to our own, and deep REVERENCE FOR HIS WORD, should be farther results of all these discussions to those under the real teaching of the Spirit. "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Rom. xi. 33, 34. If his truth be established, his name honoured, his word magnified, and his will accomplished, the Christian's highest aims are gained.

7. In conclusion, I would remark, that the whole subject may suggest to Prophetical Students an important CAUTION, not needlessly to multiply new interpretations; not without full consideration and deliberation, to bring before the public what may be a stumbling-block to the weak: and this equally applies to authors and editors of periodical works. May we all remember the almost closing words of the last book of prophecy: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these

things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

CHAPTER XV.

ON JUDGMENTS CONNECTED WITH THE COMING OF CHRIST AND THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH THIS SHOULD BE VIEWED.

[232] It is the general opinion of those who have most diligently studied the word of prophecy, founded on such passages as Dan. ii. 35; vii. 9, 11, 26, and the general burden of prophecy, that those judgments which have, for the last forty years, more or less, been pouring out upon the seats of the four universal empires, will be continued and increased, till the utter destruction of all Antichristian powers, and the full and final establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom at his coming. Respecting the nature and extent of these judgments, and whether their full issue as it respects the seats of the Universal Empires, be not an overwhelming destruction like that of the deluge, (only by fire) as well as respecting the nature of the coming and Kingdom of Christ, and whether that coming be personal and visible, or merely the infliction of these judgments, and the establishment of his kingdom; there are great differences of opinion; but assuredly there is enough of clear prediction to [233] awaken the most careless mind, that does indeed believe the Bible to be the word of the living God, and enough of danger and excitement in the actual state of the nations, and a distressing extent of wickedness and apostacy actually existing, to give the Christian remarkable signs of the times, and call for a watchful and prayerful spirit.* There

* It is striking to observe the manifestation which the public press of our country, without any idea of illustrating prophetic views, is giving of those characters of the age which are delineated in the word of God. We have continually brought before us specimens of judgments on the countries, workings of infidelity, and the decay of Mahomedanism in these last days.

It is fully admitted, that there is a considerable danger of over-estimating passing transactions, but there is also a parallel danger of disregarding the signs of the times.

The progress of an absolute denial of the knowledge of God in Socialism, as it is falsely called, has been painfully manifest in our own country, as well

is an awful [234] reserve of threatened but unaccomplished wrath, yet to be poured out on evil men.

The judgments to come upon the earth, concern both the church of God, and the world. As to the church, they must be viewed, as far as concerns real Christians, as fatherly chastisements, full of the seeds of future blessedness and glory, (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.) It appears from various expressions of prophecy, which we may justly suppose to refer to these times, (Dan. xii. 10; Rev. xiv. 12, 13), that times greatly to exercise the patience of God's servants, and of suffering to purify them, are at hand. Our Lord, when announcing his second coming in glory, has again and again said, (Matt. xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24; xvii. 33,) *Whosoever will save his life, shall*

as the general indifference to the Protestant truth, among large leading classes in our country.

In the account given in the Quarterly Review for November, 1834, of "Paroles du Croyant," a French work, recently published, we have the following description of that work.

"An attempt to amalgamate revolution with religion, and to preach rebellion and regicide in scriptural phraseology—has created a sensation on the continent, which appears one of the signs of the times." It is said that it has run through 15 editions, been translated by the zeal of the Radical Propagandist, into almost all the European languages,—has been answered by at least a dozen pens,—denounced in Episcopal charges, and interdicted by the Pope. It affects in its form and phrase to be a kind of serious parody of the prophetic scriptures and more particularly the Apocalypse. It opens with a transcript of some passages of Holy Writ,—“In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen.”—“He who has ears,” &c.—“He who has eyes let him see, for the time cometh.” In one part it brings in the seven men crowned, drinking foaming blood out of a skull, and saying, “Maudit soit le Christ, qui a ramené sur la terre la liberté.” It is, in short, described as containing 40 chapters of impiety, sedition, jacobinism, and incomprehensible absurdity, combined with religious expressions from the scriptures. What a commentary on 2 Timothy iii. 1—5!

The drying up of the river Euphrates (Rev. xvi. 12.) is equally illustrated by the following statement from the Edinburgh Review of October, 1834, of Conolly's Journey to North India:—

"A curious part of the volume before us is the vivid picture which they casually exhibit of the internal disorganization—the demoralized state, and want of social security, in every country of Asia in which the author travelled. All other accounts tend to the same conclusion. It should seem that at this moment the Mahomedan states, all over the world, are in a worse condition than at any former period; and not only worse, but also more hopeless. They not only have no prospect of any favourable internal change, but have given up all expectation of it. They are suffering a visible and rapid decay. They are ill governed and wretched within, and weak without. The star of the Moslem is visibly on the descent. They are now arrived at a great crisis. Turkey, so long the stronghold of the faith, and the terror of Europe, exhibits every symptom of imbecility. The states of Barbary, Egypt, Syria, Greece, the country beyond the Danube, and large provinces on the Black Sea, have been virtually, or really, wrested from her. The other Mahomedan states are in a similar condition. India, another Bulwark of the faith can no longer yield it any support. Persia is a prey to divisions; and if it ever was as weak before, never was placed near so dangerous a foe."

lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. In the words of the late Mr. Cecil, "The church has endured a Papal and a Pagan persecution; there remains for her an infidel persecution, general, bitter, purifying, cementing."

It is a serious question on this subject, **WHETHER THE WITNESSES (Rev. xi.) HAVE YET BEEN SLAIN.** [235] Interpreters have differed respecting what is meant by these two witnesses. The most generally received opinion is, that they are the whole body of faithful Christians composed of Jews and Gentiles. St. John by designating them as *the* two olive trees, refers us to Zech. iv. 8, where we have a fuller description of their office. The definite number *two* seems to point out the testimony of the prophets and apostles, ministering life, light, and grace to that church of Christ, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The glorious company of the apostles is considered as one witness, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets as another, and both existing in the continued living testimony of faithful Christians.*

Some of the most able of modern commentators, as Cuninghame, Faber, and Frere, think that these witnesses have been slain and raised; but they differ as to the events by which the prediction was accomplished. Many different events have indeed been supposed to realize this prediction, and this necessarily increases the doubt whether it be yet accomplished;† so

* Some have referred them to the Albigenses and Waldenses, others to the Old and New Testaments, and others to individuals yet to arise. See the Appendix to "Homes on the Millennium," recently published.

† It is singular to observe how some of the most serious trials that have befallen faithful Christians have lasted about three years and a half. Brown in his "Harmony of the Prophecies," notices these thus:—

"After the council of Constance had laboured about three years and a half to ruin them, the Bohemians, in 1418, took arms in their own defence, and marvellously prevailed. After the Lutherans of Germany had lain about three years and a half in a most ruined condition, Maurice of Saxony, who had chiefly reduced them, took arms in their favour (1551), and procured them an imperial establishment of their liberties. [To this period Mr. Cuninghame applies the slaying of the witnesses.] After most bloody persecutions of about three years and a half, the Protestants of Piedmont and Savoy have oftener than once been marvellously relieved. [Mr. Faber refers the death of the witnesses to one of these from 1686 to 1689.] After the English Protestants had been about three years and a half in a most miserable condition, they were delivered by the death of Queen Mary, 1558. After Louis XIV. of France, and James of England, had for about three years concerted and laboured to extirpate the Protestants, they were relieved by the accession of King William to the throne of Britain. It was but about three years and a half, when the massacre of the Protestants in France, 1572, and in Ireland, 1641, were followed by remarkable deliverances to the oppressed. But as these strokes and deliverances were but restricted and particular, and as Satan is not presently bound, nor the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ, we expect a far more dreadful slaughter of Christ's witnesses by seduction and persecution." See his Harmony, p. 438, 439.

Mr. Frere, and those who follow him, consider the two witnesses as being

that to others there does not appear to have occurred any event in the history [236] of the church yet, on which the mind can rest with unmingled confidence, as having realized this period. This opinion was strengthened by the general statements of Dr. Cressener in his 'Judgments of God upon the Roman Catholic church,' though he applied it to the remarkable events in his day. The author has however been satisfied that this prophecy refers to the time before the Reformation. Robert Fleming, in his Rise and Fall of the Papacy, applied it to this time. Considerable perplexity has been occasioned by not observing the marks of time given in the account of the witnesses. The verses 4—10 are a parenthesis to explain who the witnesses are, and their past history. In verse 2, the original is *ἔδοθη*, *has been given*, (not, *is given*). The time of the vision is that of the witnesses' resurrection. It comes under the sixth trumpet in the same period as chapter x.—the time of the Reformation. In verses 8, 9, the time of their unburied exposure and the triumph of their enemies having been mentioned; in verse 11, [237] the vision resumes with their resurrection, as is marked by the change of tense. The sixth trumpet sets forth the Turkish conquests by which the Christian name was nationally extinguished in the third or Eastern empire. The next great events were the revival of letters, and the Reformation, and its history gives us the key to the war against the witnesses, their death, their exposure, and the rejoicings which followed, and their resurrection and ascension. The beast making war against them is the secular Latin empire; and the conflict describes the witnesses constantly struggling by the fire of God's word with the ungodliness of Christian nations, till, at the season of the Turkish woe, the evil reached its height, and the voice of truth was silenced; the witnesses were then overcome and slain. The dead corpses, or the scriptures alone, without living and powerful interpreters, remained, from the council of Constance, when Huss and Jerome were sentenced, to the council of the Lateran. *They of the kindreds, &c.* points out a council of the Christian church. For many particulars of the remarkable fulfilment of this, in the 5th Lateran council, the reader must be referred to an able paper in the Investigator, vol. iii. pp. 185—196, by my friend the Rev. E. B. Elliott. The Bohemians, among whom alone the truth survived, were summoned in January, 1513, at the 9th

the Old and New Testament. More had also this idea, though not exclusively, (see his works, p. 662,) and it is supposed that they were slain during the French Revolution. The author can neither enter into this view of the witnesses, nor of their death.

session of the council, May 5, 1514, no witnesses to the truth appeared—no whisper of living truth disturbed the triumph of darkness. The pope's appointed orator applied to him then, as if in its proper fulfilment,—the prediction "all kings shall worship him, all nations shall serve him," adding, "*jam nemo reclamatur, nullus obsistit.*" Other parts of his address remarkably illustrate [238] the prophecy and confirm this interpretation. The Papal annalist Spondanus, gives us many details of the congratulations and mutual presents at this very time, between the pontiffs and the kings of the earth.

From May 5, 1514, three years and six months, or 180 days, brings us to Oct. 31, 1517, the day on which Luther's well known Theses against indulgences appeared, and the date of the Reformation. Then the spirit of life truly began to enter into the martyred testimony of the word of God, with a power and energy long before unknown. Luther's letters remarkably illustrate this view. But we cannot here enlarge. The fact of the witnesses being a mystical body sufficiently accounts for the death and resurrection of the two witnesses being spiritual, while the souls beheaded for Jesus not being mystical but real, the first resurrection, (Rev. xx.) is literal and real. If parts of the Apocalypse are to have a concentrated literal fulfilment, the resurrection here would also, in that fulfilment, be literal.

The ascension of witnesses to heaven points out another period of their course, connected however with the earthquake, rather than with their resurrection. Our Lord's public ministry closed with his death, when there was an earthquake (Matt. xxvii. 54.); the public ministry of the witnesses continues after their resurrection, till the close of the 1260 days of their prophesying, and then is marked by the earthquake of the French Revolution. The earthquake marks the close of the second woe, and denotes that shock of popular revolution by which the proudest of the ten kingdoms of the papal city fell as in a moment, all its institutions were shattered in the dust, and the name of Christ nationally abjured. [239] This has more than any preceding warning impressed the papal powers with the conviction of coming judgment, and now *from heaven* the voice of Providence, in the pouring out of the vials, has confirmed the voice of the witnesses, which for 1260 years had prophesied in sackcloth.

Though the particular trial of the church marked by the triumph, in spirit at least, over the two witnesses, be past, the GREAT TRIBULATION, both as it respects the Jews in its *last* crisis (Jer. xxx. 7: Dan. xii. 1;) and as it respects the Gentiles, (Rev. vii. 14) is yet to come; and we may expect that God's

servants will be materially affected by it, however, those ready for their Lord may then be delivered. The particulars of that awful scene are described thus by our Lord: "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time,—no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew xxiv. 21, 22. In the close and AFTER that tribulation (verses 29, 30.) our Lord comes in the clouds, and the earth is consumed in the general fire. How impressive, how elevating, and yet how solemn, are the things to come, as set before us in the word! There is the great tribulation, that we may be prepared and ready for trials; and yet that tribulation is the sure mark of our Lord's speedy coming, that we may be comforted and filled with joy even when the trials have arrived: knowing how short the time is before his full return in glory, and our full redemption.

The trials that come on the church, severe as they may be, are short, and all for purification, honour, [240] and glory, to separate the chaff from the wheat, to prepare the saints for their bliss, to manifest the reality and excellence of the grace given them, and to be a blessing to all around them. Oh may we only stand fast in the Lord, in the assurance of hope that all his blessed promises to sufferers for his sake will be speedily realized!

When the mother of Zebedee's children, expecting the immediate establishment of his kingdom, came with the request, "Grant that these my two sons may sit one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom," our Lord gave her a question, as instructive to us as to her, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Matt. xx. 20—23. If we look for reigning, we must look for previous suffering. 2 Tim. ii. 21.

The previous state of mind to which Christians may have been brought, may most materially affect their standing in the hour of trial. Hence our Lord was so anxiously careful to prepare the mind of his Apostles for all the sufferings through which they had to go, that they might not be stumbled when called to suffer for his sake. John xvi. 1—4. Matt. xxiv. 9, 10.

But the judgments that come on the WORLD, or the perseveringly impenitent, are of a totally different character to the trials of the church. They are fatal, final, and everlasting; ending in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The third and final woe is that day of judgment which includes the burning of the earth; and not indeed its annihilation, but its

purification and renewal. 2 Peter iii. Rev. xi. 14—18. Oh that this might be so set before men as to lead many to repentance!

[241] The general bearing of the prophetic word is that judgments shall come on the nations of the earth before the kingdom of Christ is established. However useful Religious Societies have been or may be, and however clearly it may be, as doubtless it is, our duty to support them, yet we are not to expect through them more than a preparatory work. The scriptures lead us not to anticipate a peaceful progress to a blissful reign of spiritual and universal blessedness. The image representing the four universal kingdoms is to be *broken to pieces*; and they to become like the chaff of the summer-threshing floor, (Dan. ii. 35.) and the wind is to carry them away, and no place to be found for them; or, as it is in the explanation of prophecy, the kingdom of the God of heaven *shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms*. Dan. vii. 23. It becomes, then, a most important duty for a spiritual watchman not to deceive those for whom he watches, by *speaking smooth things, and prophesying deceits*, (Isaiah xxx. 10.) but honestly and plainly to warn men of their danger.

Mr. Faber, who does not hold the personal pre-millennial advent of Christ, has drawn the following striking statement of the times in which we live. He says:—

“Even the most careless observer cannot refrain from noticing and acknowledging the existence of a general fermentation, certainly throughout all Europe, perhaps, indeed, well nigh throughout the whole world.” After shewing the manifestations of this in a feverish spirit of change, contempt of our more sober forefathers, and over-weening estimate of our own wisdom, he goes on, “In former times the dawnings of such a spirit were at least marked by [242] a strong sense of religious obligation. But in its maturity this spirit seems portentously determined, so far as unhallowed wishes can prevail, to shut God out of his own world, to refuse all recognition of his sovereign interference, and gracelessly to scoff at the very idea of a nationally and individually superintending Providence.

“When the Spirit of innovating anarchy is thus distinguished by its close alliance with the blasphemous spirit of infidelity; and when, by his ominous junction with such associates, the Roman Man of Sin once more vindicates to himself the accurate prophetic description of the lawless one, we cannot but suspect that matters are in a state of preparation for that final tremendous overthrow of God’s enemies which is the theme of so many inspired prophecies. The very politician

of this world, purely in the way of cause and effect, anticipates a wide wasting war of principles, and a series of political convulsions upon a scale of appalling magnitude; and with his anticipations, the devout student of prophecy, deriving his expectations from a higher and surer source, fully and unreservedly concurs."

After showing, that the period of 1260 years must nearly have expired, and that the Ottoman Empire in the East, that "almost universally acknowledged subject of the sixth vial," is apparently hastening to its dissolution, he goes on to observe, "When that important event shall have occurred, the warning bell will have sounded, which marks the lapse of a peculiarly well-defined and prophetic period, and he that runs may read the remainder, as inscribed with a sunbeam." He here quotes Rev. xvi. 17—20, and refers to Rev. xviii. and xix. 11—21, [243] continuing, "Well, then, may we, both in principle and practice, attend to that awful admonition of the Saviour, which he delivered with a special reference to the final overthrow of the long incorrigible, and at length politically united Antichristian faction. "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments: lest they walk naked and see his shame." Rev. xvi. 15.*

The statements of Mr. Scott respecting the judgments to fall on papal countries, in his notes on Rev. xvi. 14—20, are striking. He says, "It is remarkable that 1600 furlongs or 200 miles is exactly the length of the Papal dominions in Italy, [it is also the length of Palestine] and probably these will be deluged with blood in a most awful manner, which is represented by language tremendously hyperbolical."

After then speaking of some who had misapplied these to the French Revolution, he adds, "I cannot but think that a more general and almost universal display of divine vengeance on all the kingdoms of the beast, those perhaps excepted, but those only who have fully and decidedly cast off his dominion, is intended by the harvest, [it will be seen that the author views the harvest in another light;] as well as still more tremendous scenes by the vintage."†

It seems, at first sight, very improbable, that at the time when there is an extended revival of religion, and a vast increase of faithful ministers, and growth of all kinds of exertion to spread the gospel, and to do good; such things should be the prelude [244] and preparation for judgments and wrath upon the nations. But the growth of wickedness with this

* See Faber's Recapitulated Apostacy.

† There are many very impressive remarks in Thorpe's 'Destinies of the British Empire,' of the judgments to come on the papal kingdoms.

growth of good;* and the plain predictions of God's word (Rev. xiv. 6, 7; Isaiah xi. 4, 9.) and the past history of Noah's preaching before the Deluge, and the prophets raised up before the first destruction of Jerusalem, and the apostles going forth from Jerusalem, before its second destruction, may lead us to see that this is the thing which God has foretold, and the past history of the church has illustrated. So far from checking missionary exertion, this state of things, while it may well abate all self-confidence and glorying, should greatly increase and enlarge our efforts, in the uncertainty of worldly things, in the duty of snatching sinners from the wrath to come; in the blessedness of, like Noah, and the prophets, and the apostles, confessing Christ boldly [245] amidst a world that denies him, and in the hope that the seed now scattering may be of unutterable value as to the harvest yet to be gathered in the day of tribulation.

It is undoubtedly true that the number of faithful ministers has very greatly increased in this country, to the author's personal knowledge, within the last quarter of a century; but do not let us lull ourselves into a false security from this blessed fact, but rather, looking also at the growing wickedness of those who reject the truth, remember what is recorded not many years before the destruction of Jerusalem; "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith," Acts vi. 7; and but ten years before, it is said, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands, *μυριάς* (tens of thousands) of Jews there are which believe." Acts xxi. 20.

What is it that brings down these judgments upon our world! Judgment is God's strange work. He has no delight in it.

* Very affecting are the statements of my friend, the Hon. and Rev. B. Noel, in his sermon, preached May 29, 1836, respecting the present state of London. He states, "Where else is there such a close and dense confederation of persons who live without God? Where else is there such civilization and knowledge combined with such reckless sensuality? Probably on the face of the earth there is not a city where there are greater numbers who have thrown aside the very forms of religion." In another place he says, "They have more guilt than the heathen, because they have greater means of knowledge." "While the number of religious persons in this city have been increasing, never was there, I think, so large a mass of utterly unregarded heathenism in it as at this moment." This is the state of the most favoured metropolis of Christendom, the chief seat of all the religious societies that have been formed for evangelizing the world! Surely while there is a strong appeal for supporting the truly beneficent plans of the Bishop of London, there is an awakening warning seconding the admonition of prophecy to us Gentile Christians. *If God spare not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.* The result of inquiry into many a favoured country village would, it is feared, if considered in proportion to its opportunities, display a similarly neglected gospel and extended growth, in evil, as well as in good. The author has, in his sermon on the real dangers of the City of London, shewn that there are 700,000 persons able to attend, yet wholly neglecting public worship, in this metropolis of Christendom.

It is the persevering, open sinfulness of man, and the misery that sin and rebellion against God, produces over our world. What sins, then, bring these judgments? There are various classes of sinners. There are *the citizens* who *hate our Lord* and send an open message after him, saying, "*We will not have this man to reign over us,*" who shall be brought and slain before him. There are those who make light of Christ, and go to their *farms and merchandise*, who shall never taste his bliss. There is the idle servant, who hides the talent; and the unmeet guest who has not on the wedding-garment.

A more particular statement of the sins set forth in the scriptures as marking the last days, may be profitable to assist in self-examination.

[246] The sins of *ministers of the gospel* are specially dwelt upon, as among the latter day signs. 2 Peter ii. 1—3; Jude; Ezekiel xxxiv. 2, 3; Jer. xxiii. 1—3; Mal. iii. 2, 3. The declaration of Luther as to the decay of Reformation which he anticipated is remarkable. He says, "This doctrine which I do often report, and not without tediousness do still beat into your heads, and define unto you, will be darkened and defaced again when we are dead, for the world must be replenished with horrible darkness and errors, before the latter day comes."

The sins of rulers in disowning and neglecting him by whom *kings reign and princes decree justice*; and by whom *princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth*; with the pride and haughtiness, luxuries and prodigality of men in general, point out the last days. Isaiah ii.; Jer. xxii.; Hab. ii.

The predominating character of these days is thus graphically set before us, with the charge, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." Covetousness and worldliness mark the same times. Matt. xxiv.; Luke xvii. "Surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life," (Luke xxi. 34; Rom. xiii. 13,) are also sins of these days. Sabbath-breaking (Ezek. xx. 13; xxii. 8; xxiii. 38.) brought down God's judgment on Jerusalem of old, and so it will on many nominal Christians now. "Scoffers at the coming of Christ," [247] (2 Peter ii.) and men not knowing God, and not obeying his gospel (2 Thess. i.) are to abound in the last days. *Knowledge* increasing (Dan. xii. 4.) and *love* decreasing, (Matthew xxiv. 12.) mark the same period.

INFIDELITY, in varied forms, either of avowed Deism, or more hidden, but perhaps more dangerous ones of Neologianism and systems of expediency, is another sin of this last day. Psalm xiv. 43; Jude 15; 2 Peter iii. 2. The sins of *high-mindedness* and *unbelief* are marked by St. Paul as the special reasons of the Gentiles not being spared. Rom. xi. 18—21.*

Before the coming of Christ, St. John testifies "I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth [248] of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Other marks of ripeness for judgment are set before us by St. Peter and St. Jude, in connection with the coming of our Lord. "Chiefly them that walk in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." 2 Peter ii. 10. "These filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." Jude 8.†

The issue of this wickedness, increasing against increasing light, seems to be the full-grown, open, and avowed *Man of Sin*, in his last and worst form. Driven out of all his other refuges of lies, Satan now will manifest himself in declared in-

* We see in the prophecies of Malachi how it is the character of a fallen church to repel every charge which God brings against it, and justify itself in every thing, and lay all the blame on God. God had many charges against the Jews. He begins them by stating, *I have loved you*; for that is the real ground of all our condemnation. They question this, *Wherein hast thou loved us?* God clearly proves his love to them, and tells them they *despise his name?* Again they question it, *Wherein have we despised thy name?* If they admitted this it would condemn them. He says *ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar*, again they deny it, and God proves his charges. Then they find all his service bondage, *Behold what a weariness is it!* God denounces his threatening and shews again their sins and tells them, *he regardeth not the offering any more, nor receiveth it with good will at your hands.* Again they justify themselves and ask *Wherefore?* he says, *ye have wearied the Lord with your words.* Still they go on upon the same plan of self-justification, *Wherein have we wearied him?* He shews them this sin also, and invites them to *return unto me and I will return unto you.* They again reply in the spirit of self-justification, *wherein shall we return?* He charges them *ye have robbed me.* They deny this also, *wherein have we robbed thee?* and the sin is again proved upon them. Another charge is made, *Your words have been stout against me,* and they repel it still. *What have we spoken so much against thee?* And this sin is established against them. What a picture does Malachi thus give of nominal religion in fallen churches! And though the Lord says *he hateth putting away*, yet the result of such a contest necessarily is the punishment of evil doers; while they that fear the Lord are spared, *all the proud and all that do wickedly* are burned up. Mal. iv. 1.

† The practical working of Trades Unions and the bitter spirit fostered by them against the masters is shewn in a remarkable article in Blackwood's Magazine for March, 1838. It is curious that an addition was made in 1822, in the word and oath Armageddon, from Rev. xvi. 16., more vicious in its nature than a former oath with the word Ashdod, from Isa. xx. 1. The mixture of religion and lawlessness in these oaths may be seen in the speech of these leaders. See p. 284, 285, of that work. The progress of the Chartists since has been very great.

fidelity and blasphemy, in more express and open wickedness than ever he has done hitherto. Dan. xi. 36. 2 Thess. ii. 6.

These are the things which prepare the way for the great tribulation, and those judgments which the scriptures set before us in connection with the coming of our Lord. Open and avowed infidelity and rebellion must be put down by manifest judgments. His day is a day of vengeance as well as of redemption; but it does not appear to the author to be a day of universal destruction, even of the wicked, without giving them space for repentance and calling upon the Lord. Those prepared for it are eminently blessed; [249] and many of the inhabitants of the world also shall in that day, when "God's judgments are in the earth, learn righteousness;" (Is. xxvi. 9.) but, though God has given many warnings, others, like Pharaoh and his host, will only be more hardened and rebel the more, till they bring upon themselves swift destruction. It is indeed an awful day. There seem first to be fearful temporal judgments, the great tribulation, (Dan. xii. 1. Matt. xxiv. 21. Rev. vii. 14; xvi. 18.) before the descent of the Son of Man, and his final punishing his enemies, and sitting on the throne of his glory to judge all nations. Matt. xxv. 31. And thus the great God will at length openly vindicate himself before men, and all shall know that he is the Lord.

The world seems now ripening, by its sins, for that fearful vintage of divine wrath, which is the subject of so many predictions of the word of God. Isaiah lxiii. 3. Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 19, 20; xix. 15. The sun of prosperity which should melt the hard heart, and convert it to God, prepares sinners for destruction. Proverbs i. 32. *Instead of the goodness of God leading them to repentance, they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.* Oh that these solemn truths might yet reach the consciences of men, and awaken repentance in many thus sinning against the Most High!*

* In considering the causes of judgment in the last days, we must bear in mind the awful scripture doctrine of men's *filling up the measure of the sins of their fathers*, and the accumulated amount of guilt thus contracted. Wrongs done to the Jews from age to age; oppressive slavery in colonies; the cruelties inflicted by all European nations in their foreign settlements: by Spaniards on the natives of America, by Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English, in their respective colonies; the millions of innocent men, women, and children we have made to perish in the course of the African slave trade; unjust wars between professedly Christian nations; the wrong done to God's truths by the usurpation of Popery, and by all who have partaken of its spirit; the licentiousness, cruelty, and oppression of Mahomedan nations; the dishonour put upon God our Saviour, and the injustice done to men, by using his name and his authority to sanction practices wholly contrary to his word and his love; the way in which the United States of America have made encroachments on the Indians, more destruc-

[250] From various passages of God's word it would appear that these judgments will fall with special weight upon those who have been unfaithful to that high trust which God commits to men, when he places them as his own representatives in the offices of rulers, magistrates, and ministers. See Ezekiel xxxiii.; xxxiv. Jer. xxiii. 1—3, Malachi ii. 1—9. Isaiah iii. 11—17. Rev. xix. 18. May this awakening consideration have its right influence upon our minds.

It is a dangerous delusion for the church to be anticipating peaceful triumphs, prosperous days of enlarging dominion, and uninterrupted successes, when we may be on the verge of increasing trial and conflict, sorrow and suffering. It is much more safe to be counting the cost and preparing for the cross, and looking to the crown, in the way of patient faithfulness unto death, rather than in the way of an unmingled glow of success. It is true that it is our richest privilege to fulfil the work which God now [251] assigns to his church, (Rev. xvi. 6—13.) and that any special success is a gracious reward for our efforts; but there is considerable danger, (and the author speaks experimentally, having himself often fallen into this snare) of looking only at the bright result, and disregarding the intervening *great tribulation*, (Dan. xii. 1.) and *the hour of judgment*. Rev. xiv. 7.

It appears from the prediction of our Lord and his Apostles, that a remarkable mixture of disquietude and peace, agitation and underground movements, yet with freedom from external warfare, and full engagement in works of outward tranquillity, shall mark the time preceding the day of the Lord. (Compare Luke xvii. 26—31; xxi. 25, 27. Matt. xxiv. 36—39; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) “Were it not,” says Mr. Cuninghame, “that we see both sides of the prophetic picture exhibited in the events of the very time in which we live, it would be difficult to conceive the possibility of reconciling things apparently so oppo-

tive (said an American secretary of war) to the Indian natives, than the conduct of the conquerors of Mexico or Peru; and the retaining in hard bondage so large a population as American Christians now do! Who can survey these things, or look at the past history of the world, without seeing that the nations of the earth are lying under fearful arrears of guilt, for which there has been yet no adequate repentance on the one hand, nor that open and full retributory justice which such conduct merits from the Judge of all the earth. Penitence, weeping, and humiliation, rather than boasting, high-mindedness, and glorying in ourselves, becomes every European nation at this moment; and to this should be joined a *breaking off of our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, that it may be a lengthening of our tranquillity*. God's children are engaged in this work in seeking to send his truth through the earth, and to put away evil from us.

site as a state of terror, dismay, and agitation, on the one hand; and on the other, one of peace and anticipations of peace, and of worldliness. But no attentive observer of the signs of these times will deny that we see before our eyes both these states of mind."

These things manifestly increase, and lead us to think that this awfully important event is at hand.

What, then, is **THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND IN WHICH** God's purposes, as revealed in his word, of events yet to take place, should be viewed?

Let us not view them in **UNBELIEF**, because Christians differ in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy; or because it is perfectly clear that "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover [252] the sea;" let us not lose sight of the prediction that he shall previously "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked." Isaiah xi. 4, 9. The two are inseparably connected. "Behold! your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense: he will come and save you." Isaiah xxxv. 4.

Nor let us view the divine purposes, as regulating *our political conduct*, so as to set aside any clear duty. The path of precept is the path of duty, and the precepts are plain as the noon-day. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1—4. See also Titus iii. 1, 2. 1 Peter ii. 13—17. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change." Proverbs xxiv. 21. If the Jews were directed in a foreign land, and when among enemies, "Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it," (Jeremiah xxix. 7.) much more should we seek the peace and welfare of our own beloved country in every practical way. That advice of Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, shews the true secret of national peace: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Dan. iv. 27. It is the more necessary now to insist on this spirit, as some of the peculiar features of the last days are, that men are "false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady and high-minded." 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4. "They walk in the flesh, after the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, presumptuous are they and self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 2 Pet. ii. 16. Oh, may all professing Christians of every denomination be guarded by [253] these divine admonitions from the special temptations of these times! Equally may we be guarded from a snare into which men fell

in former ages; as if private Christians had a political part to take in accomplishing God's vengeance, and pulling down what they may conceive opposed to his kingdom.* Whatever may be the office of his saints in judging the world at the second coming of Christ, (1 Cor. vi. 2: Psalm cxlix.) our present duty is confessing Christ, prayer, and holy influence over others, till he do appear personally, and raise us to his glory; our present privilege is mainly that of witnesses to the truth, and sufferers for it; our office is now to "shine as lights holding forth the word of life," (Phil. ii. 15,) "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv. 2.

Again, let us not view the divine purposes in CARELESS INDIFFERENCE, as if we had no concern in them; we have the deepest personal interest in them; nor yet in FANCIED SUPERIORITY, as if we, by our clear discernment, could discover what was hid from others; nor yet in a DOGMATISING SPIRIT, as if, having had an inspired guidance to discern, we had then a divine commission to denounce God's judgments on the world, in our own view of those judgments; nor, once more, in HOPELESS DESPONDENCY, as if nothing but scenes of misery were before us.

[254] God's purposes should also NOT BE KEPT BACK and concealed from our fellow-men, who, immersed in the business and cares of this world, give far too little time to the study of God's word. It is our clear duty to confess the truth, and the ministers of God are more especially watchmen on the watch-tower, and bound to discern the signs of the times, and to give notice to their people of God's purposes, as revealed in his word, and developing in his providence. This is the more important, as these truths are very valuable in giving power to the ministry of the word, and making it effective to the conversion and salvation of men, and to the edification of the church. Nothing is more calculated to arouse men from the slumber of indifference, nothing more adapted to alarm the infidel in his desperate career, nothing more suitable to enable the servant of Christ to bear up against the scoff and banter of evil men, than a firm conviction of the great truths revealed in the prophetic word. The doctrine of the second coming of Christ,

* It might seem almost needless to give such a caution, but when we read the attempts of the fifth monarchy men, the Dedicatory Epistle of even Du Plessis to our King James, and the defence of it by Rivetus; or when we look at the times of the great rebellion, and even at the spirit which seems to animate some who profess religion in the present day, who can think this caution unreasonable? There is an awful mixture of profession of religious principles, among the Chartists in our country, with the very spirit of the last lawlessness.

is indeed exposed to the peculiar scorn of men, as it was specially foretold that it would be. 2 Pet. iii. 3; Jude 18. And yet this doctrine is, I am persuaded, of immense value in meeting all the difficulties through which the church has to pass in these last days, and enabling her to bear the trials to which she may be exposed.

The Jewish nation, we are expressly told, though the word of God was read every sabbath day in the synagogues (Acts xv. 21,) through ignorance of that word, crucified the Lord of glory. Acts iii. 17, 18. St. Paul says, "They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, *nor yet the voices of the prophets*, which are read every Sabbath day, [255] they have fulfilled them in condemning him." Acts xiii. 27. Oh may we then be warned not to be ignorant of *the voices of the prophets*; lest we make an irremediable mistake about his second coming, thinking it at a distance, instead of preparing for its approach.

It is remarkable, that the very command to attend to the subject of prophecy, is accompanied with the forewarning that it would be scoffed at, as if to arm the Christian who studies this important part of divine truth, against the peculiar snare to which he would be exposed. Just before the apostle gives his awful account of the day of the Lord, he says, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be *mindful* of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Peter iii. 1—4.

But let us consider more particularly the state of mind desirable for us with reference to ourselves and to others.

Notice first, the STATE OF MIND WITH REFERENCE TO OURSELVES. The sanctifying power of these truths is an important part of their value; and on this the scriptures dwell much. The general improvement is given in these words, by St. Peter: "What manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless: and account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation." 2 Peter iii. Our Saviour gives also most solemn instruction. "Take heed to yourselves, lest [256] at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch, ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that

shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke xxi. 34—36.

But this subject will be farther noticed in the concluding reflections.

THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND, and the way in which we should speak of these things **RESPECTING OTHERS**, is also of considerable importance. It is beautifully set before us in two striking examples, both previous to judgments upon corrupt and fallen churches.

The first example is that of **JEREMIAH**. Search through his prophecies and his book of Lamentations, and observe his faithfulness, his tenderness, his sympathy, his diligent attention to his office, and his spirit of prayer and zeal for the good of his country, and his triumphant faith in a happy ultimate issue. You cannot read his prophecies without seeing his **FAITHFULNESS**, in distinctly announcing the divine judgments, amidst the opposition of his own kindred and neighbours, (Jer. xi. 21,) according to the commission given him, (Jer. i. 17—19.)

How expressive his feelings of **TENDERNESS**! "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people!" Jer. ix. 1. "Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease; for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow." Jer. xiv. 17.

How strong are his expressions of **SYMPATHY**! "My [257] bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried." Jer. iv. 19. How earnest are his **EXPOSTULATIONS** with those who refused to repent and turn to God! "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears." Jer. xiii. 15—17. His diligent **ATTENTION TO HIS OFFICE**, and desire to turn off, if possible, the impending ruin in the midst of all his expectations of judgment, is very striking. "As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee; neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest." Jer. xvii. 16. (See also chapters xxxviii. xlii. &c.) His **SPIRIT OF PRAYER** for his country is quite affecting. "O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy

name's sake Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save. We are called by thy name, leave us not." Jer. xiv. 7, 9. Equally marked was his ZEAL FOR HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD. Always ready to help them, he preferred to abide with the remnant in their sufferings, to an honourable station in Babylon (Jer. xl.); and sought the best good of that remnant amidst all their ill usage and ingratitude. Oh how certainly will a true knowledge of God's purposes, produce in a mind under the teachings of his grace, a patriotic as well as a holy course of conduct! To pray and labour to [258] the very last for the good of all around us, is the spirit of the true servant of God.

Then, observe his joyful anticipation of future times of triumph, as set before us in chapters xxx. to xxxiii. in the midst of which we have that rich expression of God's purposes of love: "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul;" with its effect on the mind of Jeremiah: "upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me." Jer. xxxi. 25, 26.

Now this is the spirit which I pray God largely to give to all, who from his scriptures anticipate future judgments before the day of millennial glory. Oh how contrary to this is that spirit of bitterness which is exhibited, on the one hand, in receiving the statement of faults of our dissenting brethren, with feelings of amusement and pleasure; or, on the other hand, in delighting to expose the opposite faults of ministers in our establishment; or in speaking bitter things against millenarians, as enthusiastic and wild, or anti-millenarians, as infidel and apostate! The faults of others are the true Christian's grief and burden. We must "not rejoice in iniquity, but in the truth," 1 Cor. xiii. 6; and God eminently distinguishes those, not who bring railing accusations against others, nor who are interested and amused by the detail of the faults of those who differ from them, but who "sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of our land," Ezek. ix. 4.

It must, however, be admitted, that there was a sad mixture of human infirmity even in Jeremiah himself. Heavily tried, opposed, and persecuted, human corruption breaks forth, (see Jer. xv. 10; xx. 14—18,) in irritable, angry, and impatient expressions. [259] It is true that the ingenuousness with which he lays open his own feelings is exemplary, and the very badness of those feelings is profitable and humbling. Let not any despise God's truth because of the infirmities of his servants announcing that truth. Let not any despair of themselves because of inward corruptions. Let us all give the glory to God for the graces which he gave to Jeremiah; and let us learn les-

sons of humility and human corruption, in the outbreakings of nature amidst his excellencies.

There is **ANOTHER EXAMPLE** in the scripture full also of holy instruction. It is not that of the apostle Paul as set before us in Rom. ix., x., xi., or in the Epistle to the Hebrews; nor the plain practical faithfulness of the apostle James as set before us in his Epistle; but it is one without fault; that of **OUR DIVINE LORD** himself. What a spirit was his! What peculiar and unequalled faithfulness in reproofing sin! Matt. xxiii. What tenderness in his feelings towards the sinner! "When he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it." Luke xix. 41—44. Again and again in the spirit of ardent love to his people, he would have gathered the children of Jerusalem *together under his wings, but they would not.* Matt. xxiii. 37. When the women bewailed and lamented him on his way to crucifixion, his sympathizing heart turned at once from his own sufferings to the sorrows coming upon them; (Luke xxiii. 28,) and his prayer when nailed to the tree, was for his murderers: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luke xxiii. 34. In short he made himself one entire offering and sacrifice for the sins of others, that he might procure for those who rejected and crucified him everlasting salvation. Oh unequalled [260] love! Oh glorious example! Blessed Jesus! give to all thy disciples grace to tread in thy steps, and with thy faithfulness, sympathy, love and self-sacrifice, to look at all thy purposes towards thy church. But it was not merely in the dark prospect of judgment that our Saviour furnishes such a lesson for us in these days—but also in the bright prospect of glory yet to come, he bids us *lift up our heads.* How sweet and rich the promises which open his sermon on the mount! How enlarged the spirit of prayer which he taught us daily to use—*hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!* How often did he present the richest glories of that kingdom as an animating object of hope! Matt. v. 2—10; xiii. 43; xix. 28; Luke xxii. 28—30. And when he arose again and was seen of his apostles forty days, the subject of his intercourse during that period was *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* Acts i. 3. Oh may we never despise, or slight, or neglect that glorious hope which occupied the mind and engaged the converse of our divine Lord and his apostles, during that most interesting period which intervened between his resurrection and ascension!

Our prevailing views as Christians should be cheerful, hopeful, and joyful:—"Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke xxi. 28. The present state of the world is full of sin and full of misery, "the whole world lieth in

wickedness," [or in the wicked one,] (ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ) 1 John v. 19, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now;" Rom. viii. 22, but this state shall not long continue; the word of God leads us to anticipate, after the throes and pains of these last days, "the manifestation [261] of the sons of God:" and "the creation itself delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," ver. 19, 21.

While, then, we sigh over the sins which we witness, and with all earnestness, pity, and sympathy, like Noah of old, testify to the worldly and the wicked their danger, and the aggravated condemnation of those *who hold the truth in unrighteousness*; Rom. i. 18. we cannot but rejoice in the conviction that *the time is short*; 1 Cor. vii. 29. soon the Saviour returns, and though it be first to punish the wicked, yet, beyond that dark scene, all is light and love, glory and blessedness, to the church of the living God, and ultimately to the whole world.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HARVEST OF THE CHURCH.

[262] The present state of the Christian church is, in many respects, peculiar. We see two apparently quite opposite things taking place, much open and daring wickedness, and yet wide diffusion of the truth. With many affecting features of that wickedness which marks the last days: we see on the other hand a remarkable profession of truth, and extension of zeal in the same country and in the same place. Just as, before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jewish state was ripening for judgment (1 Thess. ii. 16,) at the very same time the Christian Jewish church was in its full activity and diffusiveness.

This state of things was to be expected from the plain declarations of prophecy; and it may be profitable to consider it more particularly as an animating motive for increased watchfulness and zeal, and furnishing many encouragements to God's servants. Two harvests are before us, a harvest of tares for the burning, and a harvest of wheat for the garner. Two reapings mark the great day of tribulation, the [263] harvest for the Son of Man to gather to his glory, the vintage for the Son of Man to tread in his wrath. Rev. xiv. 19. The painful part of the subject we have already sufficiently noticed. Blessed be

God there is in our world another work going on; and to be perfected in the day of tribulation.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS ALSO RIPENING FOR ITS GLORY. From age to age God has been gathering and completing the number of his elect. There has manifestly been in the churches of Christ, at large, in our day, in Britain, America, and in some degree in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, &c., a blessed revival of the church and an enlargement of exertion, that have filled the hearts of believers with thankfulness; and though these may not have the depth of other periods, and the nature and extent of this revival and God's design in it may have been misunderstood, it is a subject of richest hope and joy. God is ripening his church for its full glory. He has been scattering the seed for 1800 years, and especially in our days, and preparing all the materials for a future harvest to be gathered in.

We have an account in the 7th of Revelation of the 144,000 sealed and preserved from the last judgments; and in the 14th we have the same company in their holy character set before us. They were with the Lamb—they have his Father's *name on their forehead*—they are undefiled by antichristian pollutions, *being virgins*—they follow the Lamb *whithersoever he goeth*—*in their mouth is found no guile*—they are without fault before the throne of God. Here is a people prepared for the Lord. The following verses connect with them the very works which we now see accomplishing, of the diffusion of the gospel, and the [264] testimony of Babylon's fall, and the danger of receiving her mark. These are those fully prepared for the Lord's coming.

It appears from Ezekiel ix. compared with Revelation vii. that this sealed class are preserved from those judgments which come upon false professors.

In several of the parables we have a similar distinction. In that of the ten virgins, the wise virgins, having oil in their vessels, and ready for their Lord, enter in with him to the marriage. In that of the servants waiting, the faithful and wise servant, giving meat to the household in due season, is pronounced blessed, and rewarded; *the wise, turning many to righteousness*, are to shine as the brightness of the firmament; and our Lord *will appear the second time without sin unto salvation, to those who love his appearing*. These form the *first-fruits unto God and the Lamb*. They will be completely delivered from all the evil of the days of the great tribulation, (Isaiah xxvi. 20; Matt. xxv. 10.) and preserved in that season of temptation which shall come upon all the world, (Rev. iii. 10.) though we may not be able to tell the mode of their preservation.

Among professors of religion there are, however, vast num-

bers in an intermediate and very dangerous state; the *lukewarm* of Laodicea; *the foolish virgins* of the parable; *the many* whose *love waxes cold, because iniquity abounds*; those who have *the name to live, and are dead*. They are little to be distinguished outwardly from decided Christians; they associate with them; they profess perhaps the same doctrines; they think they are right, that they are *rich, increased with goods, and have need of nothing*; and yet continuing in this state, they will assuredly be left [265] in the terrors of the great tribulation. May all such be *zealous and repent*.

But, as in the Laodicean state, there were those who were invited to *hear the voice* of Christ, and to *open the door* to him, and promised that, if they did, he would *come in to them, and sup with them*, and if they overcame they were to *sit down with him on his throne*, so may we hope that multitudes may yet hear the gracious invitations of Christ.

The analogy of the last gatherings in the Jewish dispensation, as recorded in the Acts; the promises of the latter rain as well as the former (Joel ii. 23; Zech. x. 1.); the literal assurance that God will, in the last days, pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh, (Joel ii. 28.); the reason of the delay in the coming of the day of Christ, (2 Peter iii. 9, 10.) may well strengthen these hopes.

The prediction in Rev. vii. especially brings this **HARVEST, YET TO BE GATHERED**, within the time of the great tribulation. The prophecy alludes to the feast of tabernacles, called the feast of ingathering, when the harvest of the earth was fully completed, and which was to be observed in memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. The passover and the Pentecost have had their antitypes; that of the Tabernacles is yet to be observed (Zech. xiv. 16.); and its glorious Antitype will be exhibited in this extended conversion out of all nations to Christ; "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and having palms in their hands." But we are expressly told, *These are they which came out of great tribulation*. The original is still more emphatic [266] (ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης) *out of the tribulation, even the great one*. There is but one such tribulation, and it is yet to come. Hence we may conclude that the great harvest will then be gathered.

In his sermon before the European Missionary Society, the author thus stated his sentiments:—

"It is, in my view, a mistake to suppose that God will at once, and in the first instance, send exterminating judgments on all the false professors of the gospel; on the other hand, it

is, in my view, a similar mistake to suppose that we are advancing by a peaceful process of efforts of real Christians, under the enlarged effusions of the Spirit of God, to a merely spiritual millennium. Both these sentiments appear to me to be partial views of what God has revealed. The present state of Gentile Christendom is a thing which God's word has foreseen and anticipated, and that word has not left us without bright hopes in the very midst of the impending judgments. In the beautiful emblem first given to Noah, he was told, "it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud." As we see in the parallel of the Jewish dispensation, the richest ingathering out of that nation to Christ, was just before those judgments which cut them off as a nation from the visible church; the fullest measure of true conversion with which the nation was blessed, and of which it was instrumental to others, being very probably from the ministry of the Baptist to the fall of Jerusalem: so may we, from various intimations of God's word, hope that it will be, in the last days of the Gentile dispensation. This seems made plain respecting the Gentiles now out of the pale of the church, by the latter part of the seventh of Revelation. [267] This also seems intimated with regard to Christendom, by the messengers, in the parable of the great supper, going, at the supper time, to *the streets and lanes of the city, to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind*: for such those are really, who think themselves *rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing*. So our Lord, in comparing the kingdom of heaven to the seed, tells us there is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; and when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come;" we seem to have here another intimation of a full harvest in the end. It is so like our God, and we see it so remarkably in his dealings with his church, to make grace abound, even in the time of abounding iniquity, that we may entertain scriptural and cheering hopes of large conversions to God before, and even during, these awful judgments: "When thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

"Oh how little do the infidel and lawless spirits of this age know of the mind of God, and the effects of all their policies, wisdom, and apparent triumph! They gain the recognition of evil principle after evil principle, and accomplish design after design, but even now the Lord's restraining hand is so upon them, that all works for good to his church. They are already shouting their songs of victory, but God will shew, that *wherein they dealt proudly he was above them*. There is a victory coming, but it is not for them, but over them. How striking are the

words of the Lord! "Woe to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us? Surely [268] your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He hath no understanding? It is not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?" Yes, however dull now our understanding of the prophecies, so clear shall every thing then be, that it is added, "in that day shall the deaf hear the words of this book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness; the meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."

To this glorious harvest we would refer the fuller statement given to the apostles, in Rev. xiv., as follows:—"Thrust in (*πέμψον*, send) thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in (*ἔβαλεν*, or threw) his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." It does not appear that the Son of Man is *here* represented as personally coming to the earth, it seems rather the gathering of a harvest before his personal coming, the harvest of the church. This is a bright hope in the midst of the dark judgments now hanging over us.

Most practical and awakening are these truths. May every Christian diligently search to discover to which class he belongs in the church of Christ, whether he will be found among the first fruits unto God and the Lamb; or in a lukewarm state: whether he is unprepared, like the foolish virgins, for our Lord's return; or ready like the wise virgins. The Son of Man is coming; "he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with [269] unquenchable fire," (Matt. iii. 12;) and the practical lessons addressed to us are, "flee from the wrath to come, bring forth fruits meet for repentance—bring forth good fruits." Matt. iii. 7—10.

These are lessons specially enforced by the signs of the times in which we live, and by the voice of prophecy, speaking from the divine oracles to us in these times. And by urging these truths on the minds and consciences of men, perhaps many a *brand* may be yet *plucked out of the fire*. (Zech. iii. 2.) That which is impossible in nature is possible in grace; and he who was by nature a child of wrath, may become through grace a child of God and an heir of glory. Oh that we may labour in sending the gospel now as wide and as far as we can,

and in fervent prayer; that for many, very many precious souls, we may have to give thanks to him who makes us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

The times are very awful to those who can only see the tendency and the natural effects of the principles and course now in dominancy, and to those whose hopes centre in this world, or in any earthly good whatever; but they are not unmingled with the richest hopes and joys to the Christian. Though he is more alive to the evil and mischief now abroad than others, yet they tell him of a coming Saviour, and a blessed kingdom of righteousness, and a full reward: and so, while those awful things which he witnesses come to pass, he learns *to lift up his head, for his redemption draweth nigh.*

But let us in the close, contemplate that bright bow of promise which marks the love of God, in the impending thick cloud of judgment.

[270] Amidst all the toils, disappointments, and sorrows of life, what ample grounds of ENCOURAGEMENT AND JOYFUL HOPE may we have from the views which the Bible holds out of the future, full, open, and everlasting triumph of Christ our Lord! There is *in keeping* God's commands a present great reward: the good that is done now is done by self-denial and self-sacrifice; and the only real happiness in this world is gained in the paths of love to God and love to man. But it need not be said how mingled and defective all here is; now with regard to the future, we may name it as Lamech did his son, Noah, (that is rest or comfort) "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of hands." Here is one Bible ground of comfort. 1 Thess. iv. 18.

All classes who are *looking for that blessed hope*, (Titus ii. 13) and *loving his appearing*, (2 Tim. iv. 8) may here find the fullest comfort amidst their varied difficulties. The CHRISTIAN POLITICIAN, engaging with ardour in schemes of melioration for the good of his country, may learn, not to cease from any wise scheme of benefitting his fellow men, but to increase all self-sacrificing labours, thankfully to enjoy all immediate good produced, to be comforted amid the multiplied vexations of such a course, and the exceeding wickedness through which his plans have to struggle, by the anticipation of acceptance with the righteous Governor of the universe, a sure reward from him, and a state of the world hereafter beyond all conception blessed and glorious; a time when a *king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.* THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER conflicting with sin, and the world, and Satan, in

his parish or among his flock, seeing perhaps but [271] little present fruit of his labours, and getting increasing knowledge of nests of unsuspected wickedness on every side; weighed down with anxiety and disappointment, may here be quickened in all his exertions, and in his disappointments be greatly comforted; his *labour is not in vain in the Lord*. There is a present blessing, but the rich reserve of reward is in the kingdom to come; then his converts shall rise up as his *joy and crown of rejoicing*. The CHRISTIAN PARENT, amidst the joys and comforts, and amidst also the cares and heart-aching sorrows of a family; may have his hopes elevated to brighter expectation than any that earth can now afford, and his sorrows alleviated with the blessed prospect of that kingdom where *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*, and the one family of Christ be gathered together for ever. The covenant of the kingdom given to his Son, the Messiah, seems to have been David's peculiar consolation in the midst of his family troubles (2 Sam. xxiii. 3—5,) and this may be our comfort in such troubles also. The AFFLICTED every where may turn with the greatest advantage to this blessed Jubilee, when, after *the day of vengeance* on the wicked, it is the office of our anointed king, "To comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." The PROSPEROUS may learn the best use of their property, not in a voluntary humility and poverty, not required in God's word, but in using the world, as not abusing it, and being *rich in good works*. 1 Tim. vi. 17. And all FRIENDS OF MISSIONS and [272] all seeking to save souls, without being cast down by those disappointments occasioned by false and delusive hopes, unrealized in the actual results of those efforts at present, may have, in this view, large scriptural encouragement in all these exertions, and a true hope for the ultimate success of all their wishes and labours.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MILLENNIUM AND FIRST RESURRECTION.

[273] The millennium, means *a thousand years*. It is the period predicted under that name by St. John in the 20th chapter of Revelation. The first resurrection is the event there predicted, "I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their forehead, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years—but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years- were finished. This is the first resurrection," (verses 3—5.)

On this prediction there are various opinions; some think it past, though they differ in their exposition of its meaning. But the most general opinion of modern divines has been that it is designed to point out a spiritual resurrection of men [274] animated by the spirit of the martyrs and a happy spiritual state of the church yet to come.

On a subject yet, as the author is persuaded, unfulfilled, and which from the early ages of the church, has occasioned so many differences of opinion, modesty of sentiment especially becomes us. It may be well here rather to let others, and especially to let the holy scriptures speak, than to enter into any lengthened detail of reasons which lead the author to think that the first resurrection (Rev. xx.) is a literal, rather than a spiritual one. Some of those indeed who have pleaded most earnestly for its being a spiritual resurrection, (as Bishop Hall, the celebrated Baxter, and the late Mr. Gipps) consider it as already past.* So that Bishop Hall said nearly 200 years ago, in his *Revelation Unrevealed*, one of the strongest works

* The fullest modern statements of the view that the millennium is past are given by Mr. Vint, in his *New Illustrations of Prophecy*, and Mr. Bush in his *Treatise on the Millennium*. Both contain manifestations of a forced construction and strained application of expressions, which fail—the author speaks for himself—to carry any conviction along with them, and are painfully instructive, as shewing how the mind may be led astray by its endeavours to establish a particular system, and the ingenuity it may put forth to make it complete. But both contain also useful incidental discussions and illustrations.

against Millenarians, "For my part, I am persuaded in my soul, that the coming of our Saviour is near at hand." It seems as if God would lead his church to prepare for the coming Saviour, whatever views they may take of that which follows his coming.

Those who look upon Millennial views affirmatory of the restoration of the Jews, and the previous resurrection of the saints, as dangerous innovations, and opening the way to other errors, would do well [275] to listen to the following testimony of the late Bishop Van Mildert, who, by the extent of his learning, and the general sobriety of his judgment, is at the farthest remove from all suspicions of wildness and extravagance.

"Nothing is more certain than that the scriptures clearly foretell the conversion and restoration of the Jews, and that a most satisfactory pledge of the fulfilment of the predictions is already given by what has actually been brought to pass in their dispersion and preservation.

"Respecting the Millennium, or reign of the saints on earth for 1000 years after the events shall have taken place, there is room for a great variety of conjecture. Whether with the earlier fathers of the Christian church, and some eminent expositors of modern times, we are to expect, that a resurrection and triumph of the saints shall precede the general and final resurrection; or whether we hold with others that it is not to be a reign of persons raised from the dead, but a renovated state of the church, flourishing gloriously for 1000 years, after the conversion of the Jews, and the flowing in of all the nations to the Christian faith; it is not necessary to determine. The former interpretation seems to offer the least violence to the language of scripture, and is supported by great authority. But our trust in the promises of God depends not on the determination of this question; since, whichever interpretation we adopt, the splendid predictions of the inspired writers, both in the Old and New Testament, will doubtless be verified either in a literal or a figurative acceptation, to their fullest extent. In the mean time, the condition of the church, antecedently to that its [276] triumphant state, may reasonably be expected to exhibit a diversified scene of trial and victory, of peril and deliverance, of depression and recovery, similar to what it has hitherto undergone."*

The sentiments also of the learned, humble and pious Mede may well weigh with those who really know his writings. He remarks, "I incline on the whole to the opinion founded on the sentence of St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. that all the righteous will

* See Van Mildert's Boyle Lectures, pp. 456—458.

rise again during the course of the millennial kingdom: but in a certain order, according to that of the apostle, (1 Cor. xv. 23,) first in the very commencement of the Millennium, the Martyrs, then the rest according to the decree of God the Arbiter, and that this is called *the first resurrection*, or *the resurrection of the Just*. Luke xiv. 14. Afterwards, the Millennium being completed, the wicked will rise; the last and universal judgment be completed; these to be thrust down to the fire, and the saints to be carried up to the heavenly mansions, where they will live forever with Christ. I do not indeed think we are to expect two advents of Christ: but one, namely, that in which he will judge the quick and the dead at his appearing; but that both his advent and his judgment will be protracted through the period of a thousand years.”*

Some, who believe that our Lord will personally appear for the conversion of the Jews, doubt whether there will be *then* a resurrection of his saints. We must ever speak with reserve and humility of events yet to take place, but the author after weighing the [277] arguments on each side, though he differs from friends whom he highly esteems and loves, is inclined to think that such a previous resurrection is revealed, not only in the seat of the doctrine, Rev. xx. 1—6, but also, in the general statements that occur respecting the resurrection. At the restoration of Israel, before the Millennium, *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*. Daniel xii. 2. This, the Jewish Rabbi, Saadiah Gaon, thus interprets,—“This is the resurrection of the dead of Israel, whose lot is to eternal life; but those who do not awake, they are the destroyed of the Lord, who go down to the habitation beneath, that is Gehenna, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

The gradual light thrown by scripture prophecy on more remote events is very full of wisdom and importance. It is like the view of a rich and extended landscape in nature; the more distant scenes are thrown together, and though they may be widely separated, appear as one group. Thus in the prophecies the more distant events are grouped as it were together, and unfolded as the time draws near.● The impressive lessons taught by the future events are thus left with more unbroken power on our minds. When we come to the last chapters of Isaiah, Zechariah and Revelation, we have a separation and distinct view of these distant events. Some have wondered that any can think Daniel xii. 2, contains a period of a thousand years; but the next verse describes eternity. We want the largeness of the eye of God in interpreting his word!

* See the extract in the Christian Observer for 1828, p. 451.

Some instances of this may make it plainer. Joel iii. 13, groups together events in one verse which, in Rev. xiv. 14—20, are expanded and viewed in distinct [278] features,—as the harvest of the church, and the vintage of the wicked. Daniel xii. 2, groups together, in one verse, events which are developed distinctly in the twentieth Revelation. Genesis iii. 15, groups, in one verse, the whole history which the subsequent Bible develops.

It is curious and interesting to know what sentiments the Jews, with only Old Testament light, held on this subject. Though they differed materially in their views of the resurrection in other respects, yet they generally identified the coming of the Messiah, and a resurrection.* It is fully shewn in Mr. Humphrey's account of the ideas of the Jews on this subject, that they held that there were three states or conditions after this life; (1) a state of incomplete happiness or misery after death, till the general resurrection; (2) the reign of the Messiah, always joined (through a great mistake Mr. H. adds) to the resurrection; and (3) the world of souls; or a state which succeeds the resurrection of the dead and the reign of the Messiah. The Jewish writers generally mention together the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, and frequently consider them as branches of the same proposition; and from the first Psalm verse 4, assert that the resurrection was peculiar to the just; and on the second Psalm, Kimchi quotes an ancient apothegm, "The benefit of the rain is common to the just and unjust, but the resurrection from the dead is the peculiar privilege of those who have lived righteously:" but Abarbanel [279] and Manasseh Ben Israel shew that the wicked are said to have no part in the world to come, as having no advantage or happiness in it, but are, on the contrary, consigned over to punishment for their iniquities."

Leaving, however, Jewish twilight, let us come to the clear day of the New Testament. The whole statement of the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 14—18, clearly respects the resurrection of the righteous, at the coming of the Lord, and their being brought with him; and when this is connected with the statements in the second epistle (ch. i. 7—9; ii. 1—8,) respecting (as the Author is persuaded) the same coming, and the destruction of the Man of Sin at that coming, it is conclusive, in his view, that the saints rise before the Millennium,—it being generally agreed, (at least by those who hold a future Millen-

* There is a long dissertation concerning the notions of the Jews about the resurrection of the dead in Humphrey's *Athenagoras*. See Manasseh Ben Israel *de Resurrectione Mortuorum*, 1636, 8vo. See also the 2d vol. of Schoettgenius, and especially p. 566—594.

nium,) that the Man of Sin will be destroyed before that blessed æra. According with this, is the statement in the 15th Corinthians, and in particular the expressions, "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; and then cometh the end," verse 23, 24. The Author cannot see why there should not be a lengthened interval between each of these three events; as there have manifestly been above 1800 years between Christ's resurrection and his second coming. The statement in the 52d verse, which, as the expressions, and the connection, equally manifest, relates to the resurrection of the righteous; the strength of the apostle's desire to attain this resurrection, Phil. iii. 11; and the emphatic distinctions of a special resurrection promised to the righteous (Luke xiv. 14; xx. 35, 36. Heb. xi. 35. John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54,) add farther weight and strength to [280] these observations. Nor is there any thing inconsistent with them in the expressions, John v. 28, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation:" when the term *hour* (*ωρα*) is translated *time*, Romans xiii. 11, *season*, 2 Cor. vii. 8, and in such a passage as 1 John ii. 18, as well as in the one preceding the text quoted (John v. 25.) manifestly applied to the whole period of the Christian Dispensation.* It appears to

* See Rose's Parkhurst, under *ωρα*. Those who hold a personal advent before the millennium suppose the word *ωρα*, *hour*, or *season*, in verse 25, to be a season of near two thousand years, or the days of grace and salvation, (2 Cor. vi. 2.) and in verse 28 a single thousand years, or the hour of judgment, Rev. xiv. 7; the day of vengeance, (Isaiah lxiii. 4.) and the day of the Lord. 2 Peter iii. 8, 10. Those who reject a personal advent before the millennium suppose the hour of verse 25 to be a season of three thousand years, reaching to the close of the millennium, and the hour of verse 28 to be a natural day, or perhaps the moment, the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. xv. 52. in which the resurrection of believers, and as they conceive, of unbelievers also, is stated to occur. It appears to the author that the first view is more natural, harmonious and consistent. In the one case we have an entire correspondence in the meaning of our Lord's double declaration, but in the other a great disproportion. His words on this occasion could not, it is true, teach the long extent of either season which is to be drawn from other scriptures. But now that experience has joined with unsealed prophecy to prove the extent of the first season, why should we shrink from God's express revelation as to the other. The length of the day of grace, being a season of the church's suffering and patience, was revealed, for her comfort, only under sealed numbers, Daniel xii. to be unfolded when verging to its close at the time of the end; but the length of the season of judgment being a time of the church's triumph, was openly given to confirm her hope (2 Pet. iii. 8; Rev. xx.) in the express words of God. It is only the popular use of the term *hour* which could leave doubt on the mind. The word *ωρα* has no such limitation, but is commonly used for a continued period of time, especially in prophecy. Thus we have the hour of awakening, Rom. xiv. 11, reaching from the apostle's time until now, and the last hour, 1 John ii. 18, of similar extent: the hour of temptation, Rev. iii. 10, the hour of judgment, Rev. xiv. 7, which is clearly there placed at the beginning

the author that the 20th of Revelation is, like all the rest of the book, symbolic, with literal explanations. We find literal explanations running through the book. See chap. i. 20; xvii. 15; xix. 8; and so we find in the 20th chapter, the literal explanation, *which is the Devil; and this is the first resurrection*, a similar literal explanation. The difficulties that have been made on the subject are resolvable into our ignorance. [281] How little is it possible for us to know of the heavenly Jerusalem in which the saints dwell, or of the nature and glories of their risen bodies, or of their being equal to the angels, (Luke xx. 36.) and how material must be the distinction between them, and men living in the flesh. We may soon get into the atmosphere of Socinianism, and reject every doctrine of the Bible, if mysteries and difficulties be a stumbling-block to our faith, instead of producing their right effect, a believing and patient waiting for the manifestation of God's will.

Mede justly remarks, 'You must distinguish between the state of *the New Jerusalem* (Rev. xxi. 2.) and the state of *the nations which walk in the light thereof*; (ver. 24.) they shall not be both one.' Therefore what is spoken of the New Jerusalem must not be applied to the whole church which shall then be. New Jerusalem is not the whole church, but the metropolis thereof, and of the new world. The state of the nations which shall walk in her light, though happy and glorious, yet shall be changeable, as appears by the commotion of the nations, reduced at [282] the end of the 1000 years. But the state of those who dwell in the New Jerusalem shall be beyond all risk of change. Rev. xx. 6.—See Works, p. 772.

It was Dr. Henry More's idea, that neither Christ nor his saints would be visible to men on earth during the Millennium; but they would "live with Christ in his immutable and everlasting kingdom in heaven, for ever and ever." He says, "nor do I think it necessary that the sons of this first resurrection should at all appear to us; their celestial bodies in which they have vivicated, being naturally invisible, and therefore, a kind of miracle for us to see them; and no more necessary than the exhibiting those souls to view which Christ carried to heaven in triumph after his resurrection, which yet he did not exhibit to the sight of the world." The fact of the first resurrection, and the full explanation of that fact, are totally different questions; as is the fact of the Trinity, and the explanation of that

of the millennium; the one hour, Rev. xvii. 12, of the king's confederacy with the beast, the whole season of Papal corruption. Thus, besides the correspondence between the two verses 25 and 28, the extent of both seasons is quite according to the analogy of the word of God.

blessed and most certain mystery. We believe on the testimony of revelation; we shall by-and-by *see face to face*, and *know as we are known*.

There does appear to the author considerable evidence that the Lord of glory will so dwell on earth as to be visible in his glory, in a manner, however, and to an extent, that we cannot adequately realize or comprehend. This is a subject of that intense holiness, and there is such danger of rash familiarity, that it requires us to enter deeply into the direction given to Moses, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The reasons on which it is supposed that this visible glory may at times be manifested to men are the positive promises, "The Lord God shall [283] give unto him the throne of his father David," (Luke i. 32.) "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell." Psalm cxxxii. So Jerusalem is called "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell, in the midst of the children of Israel, for ever." Ezek. xliii. 7. The expressions are such as to imply bodily and visible presence. Our Lord himself calls Jerusalem *the city of the great King*, Matt. v. 35, and speaks of a personal abode in a glory yet to come. John i. 51. There was a visible glory in his former dwelling in Israel. Exod. xxv. 8; Lev. xvi. 2. "That which was made," however, thus "glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth; for if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." 2 Cor. iii. 10. The heavenly things themselves must far exceed the mere *patterns of good things to come*. See Heb. viii. ix. x. There are also but two appearances or comings of our Lord; the *first*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and the *second*, for the salvation of his people and the judgment of the world. We have no reason, in the account of the final act of judgment, Rev. xx. 11, to lead us to think that he will be so absent after his præ-millennial coming, as to come a third time to our earth. But, O that we may regard this subject with such sacred awe as well as holy joy, that we may be kept at the remotest distance from all trifling and lightness of spirit. The Lord, our God and Saviour, though he wears our form, is infinitely glorious in holiness and majesty: and surely there is enough, both in the Old and New Testament, to check all rash and presumptuous views of near approaches to [284] his presence and glory, and all unholy and irreverent remarks upon it.

The earliest fathers held that a literal resurrection preceded the Millennium; the later fathers, Origen, Jerome, and Augus-

tine, interpreted the passages, Rev. xx. 4, spiritually. The following account given by Lardner, an anti-millenarian, will shew briefly the view of the fathers. He first quotes Jerome's Comment on Isaiah as follows: "If we understand the Revelation literally, we must judaize; if spiritually or figuratively, as it is written, we shall seem to contradict many of the ancients, particularly Latins, Tertullian, Victorinus, Lactantius; and Greeks likewise, especially Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, against whom Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, [this Dionysius threw out doubts against the Revelation, as not being the writing of the Apostle John] a man of uncommon eloquence, wrote a curious piece, deriding the fable of a thousand years, and the terrestrial Jerusalem, adorned with gold and precious stones; rebuilding the temple, bloody sacrifices, sabbatical rest, circumcision, marriages, [he here adds other descriptions of a carnal millennium] and servitude of the nations; and after this, wars, armies, triumphs, and slaughters of conquered enemies, and the death of the sinner a hundred years old. Him, Appollinarius answered, in two volumes, whom not only the men of his own sect, but most of our own people likewise, follow in this point. So that it is no hard matter to prove what a multitude of persons I am like to displease."

It is striking to observe from one so averse to the doctrine as Jerome, such acknowledgments of its extensive prevalence in the fourth century. Lardner [285] goes on to state, "It must be owned, that the orthodox millenarians do speak of 1000 years' reign of Christ before the general resurrection, which good men, having been raised from the dead, should spend on this earth, when there shall be an extraordinary plenty of the fruits of the earth; when also they shall feast upon them; when Jerusalem shall be rebuilt; when likewise there will be marriages, and bringing forth of children; but that they received marriage, and fruits of marriage, to belong to any of the RAISED SAINTS, does NOT appear to me a clear point. Origen, and some others, speak as if this was the expectation of the millenarians, even such as were orthodox, as it seems of some of them, which Origen therefore mentions, with great concern of mind, being apprehensive that such an opinion, if known by the heathens, might be a great reproach upon the Christian religion. And St. Jerome immediately after the words just cited from him, insinuates the same thing of the orthodox millenarians of his time, for which reason he reminds them of the saying of our Lord and Saviour. Matt. xxii. 29, 30. Jerome writes to the same purpose, in another place, of his commentaries upon the same prophet; but Irenæus and Lactantius, who were millenarians, do not express

themselves in that manner; what they say is, that at the time of the first resurrection, there will be found some good men living upon the earth, and that of them, in the space of a thousand years, shall be born a numerous race, a godly seed over whom likewise the raised saints are to reign, and by whom they are to be served."

It must be remembered that Mede, in various parts of his works, complains heavily of Jerome's perversion [286] and misstatement of the writings of others. He tells Dr. Twisse "how wrongfully the ancient Chiliasts, and Lactantius by name, are charged to hold that the saints which rise from the dead shall marry and get children; whereas he expressly affirms it only of those who shall be alive in the body, when Christ comes, nor did any of the rest of the fathers, Justin, Irenæus, Melito, think otherwise. From Jerome's not mentioning JUSTIN MARTYR, he supposes that he was afraid of his antiquity and authority."*

The doctrine of a near personal advent of Christ may be traced throughout all ages. The idea of a spiritual millennium, which has not yet begun, before our Lord's return, is sometimes called *the old* [287] *way, the old paths*, but is it not an entire novelty of modern times? I believe an uncommenced spiritual advent to be the real novelty. Has it any plea of general antiquity whatever to urge in its behalf? I believe not. Bishop Hall, in his list of varied opinions on this subject, gives no intimation of it. I have not been able to trace it higher than Dr. Whitby, who speaks of it as a "new hypothe-

* See Mede's Works, 812, 836. Mr. Mede and Dr. Homes have given us an extract from the works of Gelasius, of Cyzicus, who flourished about 476, and gave a history of the Acts of the Nicene Council. As this has been much quoted, it is right to observe, that Dupin throws discredit on various points in this history, as does Weisman, vol. i. p. 416, 485. But it has been inserted in Binnius, the Louvre, and other editions of the Councils, and it bears on the face of it marks of that cautious scriptural statement, which is the result of conflicting minds stating a truth on which they differ. The extract is taken from certain forms of Ecclesiastical doctrine, according to which all teachers in the church were to frame their discourses; and if it were a genuine account, it would be remarkable as proving the general opinion of the church to 325, the date of that council; but it may safely be received as Gelasius' view of the subject. The extract is as follows:—The world was made imperfect (*μικροτερος*) because of foreknowledge, (for God foresaw that man would sin) therefore we expect a new heaven and a new earth, according to the holy scriptures, when shall shine forth the appearance and kingdom of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And then, as Daniel says, the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and there shall be a pure earth, holy, a land of the living, and not of the dead, which David foreseeing by the eye of faith, cries out, (Psalm xxvii. 13,) I believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; a land of the meek and humble. For blessed, says Christ, (Matt. v. 5:) are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. And the prophet says, (Isaiah xxvi. 6.) "the feet of the meek and the humble shall tread upon it."

sis," at the beginning of the eighteenth century.* Vitringa, [288] writing soon after Whitby, though in a far superior spirit, and tremblingly sensitive of the danger of putting off the hope of our Lord's coming, adopted his sentiments of the spiritual millennium. He ably maintained the truth, that the millennium was yet to come, giving the names of F. Lambertus, C. Gallus, A. Conrad Mantuanus, C. Pannonius, J. Brocar-

* The Chapters of Durham are misty and unsatisfactory, but approach Dr. Whitby's view. It was soon adopted by more scriptural authors, as Vitringa, Edwards, Hopkins of America, Lowman, and a large body of modern divines, and so came to be the too generally received sentiment of the present day. Many of the early fathers adopted the lengthened chronology of the Septuagint. Thus Lactantius, at the end of the third century, thought he was only 200 years from the end of the sixth millenary, and he expected that after Antichrist had arisen, our Lord would return, and his saints be raised to the glory of reigning with him, at the close of the sixth millenary. The great majority of the early fathers believed in a speedy future personal return and reign of our Lord Christ. After the Emperor Constantine had favoured Christianity, the predictions of its triumph and the reign of the saints seemed to some to have commenced at that time. Reproach began to be cast by Eusebius on former Millenarian views. The elevation of the Pope at Rome made it also very inconvenient to apply the prophecies of Revelation to Rome as Babylon. After this the views of millennium become very diversified. Augustine's views were peculiar, and are given in his City of God, lib. 20. They are indeterminate, obscure, and unsatisfactory. Many who thought that the thousand years commenced at the time of Christ, expected that they would terminate at the end of the first thousand years after his coming. When nothing confirmed this at that period, it was thought that a definite number was put for an indefinite, and that the millennium had not terminated. Another class considered that they commenced with Constantine, and terminated at the capture of Constantinople by the Turks; applying to them the statement respecting Gog and Magog rising up at the close of the Millennium. The Papal writers naturally fostered these views, and sanctioned saint-worship by them. See Trent Session xxv. The Reformers in general, as far as my researches have gone, deprecate Millenarianism, and the Anabaptists tended to strengthen their objections to it; but they appear to have generally concurred in a past Millennium, and in the near approach of judgment. The non-conformists, such as Baxter, and the pious Episcopalians, such as Bishop Hall, held or favoured this view.

It was, in some respects, a clearing away of error, to acknowledge that a Millennium was yet to come; but in other respects it was a more serious injury, when men were led to view the whole as a merely spiritual coming and kingdom of Christ, yet to take place, and to extend over a lengthened period. Thus a barrier of 1000 years was raised before the real coming of our Lord. It became impossible for men to be waiting for his coming, and so they were thrown off farther than ever from the blessed hope of our Lord's speedy return, which had been in a great measure consistent with all previous views.

I have not yet discovered the idea of a spiritual Millennium uncommenced before Dr. Whitby's "new hypothesis." There have been from age to age those who have held the personal coming of Christ before the Millennium, and in most ages there have been carnal views of a mere earthly Millennium; but where is the voice of the church, as to a spiritual Millennium uncommenced, and to last 1000 years, before his real coming? The views of the Reformers, who speak plainly of the near approach of Christ's personal coming and kingdom, though they thought that millenarianism was a heresy, were less prejudicial in one respect to the truth, than the modern views, as they brought Christians to the right posture of mind, *waiting for the coming of Christ*. But it is manifest that the present generally received modern view is far from being the *old way*.

dus, A. Leoninus, Laune, Mede, and Cotter, as supporting it. One very material objection to the mere modern theory of a spiritual millennium, yet to take place before our Lord's coming, is, that this view, more than any other that the church has ever held, tends to bring all Christians to that awful and most dangerous state of mind to the evil servant, *My Lord delayeth his coming.*

But is there not too great a dread of things that may be NEW TO US. If they be really contained in the word of God, they are still *the way to stand in, and the old paths.* Jer. vi. 16. Observe how our [289] Lord makes it the very mark of *every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, that he is like unto a man who is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.* Provided, then, that we forsake not, but bring the old as well as the new OUT OF OUR TREASURE, the Bible, (let both cautions be attended to,) we may be, and are, instructed scribes unto the kingdom of heaven. It is no proof of Christian wisdom, or maturity of knowledge, to have remained stationary for many years in our views of the truth, without either growth or enlargement. Searching the scriptures implies an increasing acquaintance with divine truth; and we are charged not only to beware, lest we *fall from our steadfastness*, but also to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*; and both are connected together.

The account of the judgment, in the 25th of Matthew, has been considered as conclusive against a premillennial advent, and the first resurrection. The observations already made on this chapter, may shew that there is no ground for such a conclusion. The grouping together of events, distant in the eye of man, only confirms the deep wisdom of that earnest caution of the apostle, (2 Peter iii. 8,) the neglect of which must lead to constant error. The chief end, in these varied parables of our Lord, is to place in close and strong contrast the different results, and those final and everlasting, of faith and unbelief, of wickedness and righteousness. Details, then, are introduced only so far as they bear on this end. Thus, in the first parable, of the servant waiting for his Lord, (Matt. xxiv. 42—51,) ministers are taught the importance of giving out their Master's [290] food, to the church his family, in due season, on account of the uncertain time of their Lord's return. In the next, of the ten virgins, (Matt. xxv. 1—13,) the church at large, in its successive generations, is taught ever to be in a state of similar expectation of that event. In the third—of the talents, (Matt. xxv. 14—30)—its delay for some time, and the account to be given by every member of the church, living or dead, for the use, meanwhile of their talents and spiritual pri-

vileges, are fully set forth. In this last—of the sheep and goats—rising still in width and majesty, our Lord presents the final and universal judgment, and its simple and solemn test, the possession or want of works of charity, the fruits of faith, and that living faith which works by love. Two opposite mistakes are to be guarded against—one which refers the whole to the close, and the other to the beginning, of the millennium. First, of the former, as more general. There is no notice whatever of any millennium previous to this judgment, nor indeed any room for it. From the desolation, (xxiv. 15,) and the time of great tribulation, (ver. 21,) to the appearing of the sign of the Son of Man, (ver. 30,) and the gathering of the elect to his presence, (ver. 31; 2 Thess. ii. 1,) throughout these parables, to this last of judgment, all continues without interval or pause. Without violence to the whole, we cannot interpose a millennium of rest. Again, all included in this judgment, are tried on the ground of their treatment of Christ, suffering in the person of others. But, during the millennium, those sufferings are ended. Christ, whether in letter or spirit, is then confessedly reigning, and not suffering. The judgment, then, can only include those who have lived [291] before that time. Others, to escape from this error, have been led to assign the whole to the judgment of the quick at our Lord's coming. But the received interpretation seems here much more natural and just, so far as it refers to the final judgment of the dead in the great day of the Lord. The living nations are not, then, all gathered outwardly before Christ, (Isa. lxvi. 19,) and the sentence then inflicted on the rebellious, is death, and not final judgment. Isa. lxvi. 16; xxxiv. 2. Rev. xix. 21. The full power and spiritual glory of the parable seems thus to be obscured. The true and full view seems to be that which makes it include the resurrection of the just at the beginning, and the unjust at the close of the millennial day. It is thus parallel with the whole of Rev. xx., which is only a fuller account of the same judgment. The gathering of all the nations before the Judge, appears, by comparing other scriptures, to denote the resurrection. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Death is separation from his presence—the resurrection, a recall to that presence. And thus, even the second death, as following a resurrection, is said to be "in the presence of the Lamb." Rev. xiv. 10. This gathering answers, then, to Psalm i. 5; l. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 1, and to the Apostle's statement—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, (or company,) Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end." Thus our

Lord declares, that "He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. Mingled in the dust by death, wherein one event happeneth to all, they that are Christ's shall rise at his coming; and the separation [292] is the blessedness and holiness of the first resurrection. But for the purpose of clearly enforcing the great issues of judgment, our Lord brings into close contrast the acts of the morning and evening (to use Mede's words, founded on scripture, Psalm lxix. 14. Zech. xiv. 7,) of that great judgment-day. Further details would only have broken the solemn impression of the truth, taught in this account of the last judgment. We are not to expect the same truths in every part of the word of God; different parts have distinct objects, it is enough that all its truths are in harmony. It is so here. The work of acquittal and mercy, which is our Lord's delight, is first in order; afterwards follows the sentence of wrath, which is his strange work: and as scripture everywhere assigns the coming of our Lord to the beginning of the time of blessedness, while the giving up of the kingdom is at the close of the millennium, and thus fixes the millennium to be that day of the Lord in which he will judge the world in righteousness, we follow the current of God's word, as well as the deep instincts of a heart and conscience renewed in love after the image of Christ, in assigning the sentence of reward and mercy, to the morning, and the sentence of condemnation and wrath, to the evening, of that great and terrible day. (Mede, Ep. 66, p. 141.)*

* This view seems confirmed by the distinction, usually overlooked, between the grounds of acceptance and condemnation. The words on the former are, "*inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren;*" in the latter simply, "*inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these.*" Does not this omission, which cannot be without a cause, suggest strongly, that in the latter case the words refer to the wicked themselves? And may we not thus learn, that each company as it stands separately before the Judge, contains within itself the full test of its acceptance and its rejection, the righteous in their own mutual and brotherly love, the wicked in their own mutual hatefulness and hatred? (Titus iii. 3. Prov. viii. 36. Luke xvi. 28.) The word *these* recurring v. 46, confirms this idea. And if so, what a solemn and deep view it gives, even on the judgment itself, of the love of Christ our Saviour, *who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* The Son of Man, the express image of his heavenly Father, who sendeth rain on the just and the unjust—has taken our nature upon him, and is Lord of all, both good and bad; so that neglect of any human being, He regards as the neglect of himself. The course of judgment will thus be a growing exhibition of his love, first to the righteous, the brethren of Christ, and then even to the unbelieving, who know not God, (2 Thess. i.) as the God of love; and will thus intensely display the holy, gracious, and glorious perfections of Jehovah our Saviour. And let none conceive that the parable in general, or the above view of the closing sentence, either infringes on the freeness of salvation, or sets up a deceitful standard of mere outward benevolence. It is "the day in which God will judge the secrets of the hearts by Christ Jesus." And the common test lies in those living works of charity which can flow only, and flow necessarily,

[293] The order of the words in ver. 46 has been thought to oppose the above view. A little reflection will shew that supposing that view to be just, the continuity is really less broken than it would be if the two clauses were inverted. Besides, there is a relief to the solemn truth, by presenting last the [294] blessedness of the righteous. But perhaps a simple comparison with Rev. xx. and xxi. supplies the fullest answer. We have first the reward of the first resurrection, answering to 33—40; then the judgment (Rev. xx. 12. Isaiah xl. xlii.;) and sentence of the unrighteous, its execution (Rev. xx. 15, and 46,) and then, finally, the completed blessedness of the righteous, (Rev. xxi. 3, 4,) when every trace of the curse is done away, and their eyes can rest on a redeemed universe.

Let not, however, differences of opinion;—let not the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy, or the impossibility of conceiving how it can take place, stumble any mind. Some of the prophecies, which, before fulfilment, were dark, apparently contradictory, and of impracticable accomplishment, were, in the fulfilment, harmoniously and exactly realized; and so we may be sure it will be in this glorious hope of the church.* It stands clearly and brightly displayed in the pages of the Bible; and no part of it shall fail. Nor have any events that have yet

from a lively faith, just as the tree is known by its fruits. That faith in the grace of the judge, is weak at least, if not suspicious, which desires exemption from his judgment. Or if it seem hard to any to conceive the Lord's condemnation of the wicked to rest on his love towards them, as his creatures, the words of Luther may weigh with them—"The love which flows out of a pure heart is of this nature—God has commanded me that I should pour out my love towards my neighbour, and favour all, whether they be friends or enemies; even as our heavenly Father does, who causes his Sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and thus does good, especially to those by whom He is blasphemed day and night. And again, He giveth rain to the grateful and ungrateful. And from what motive? From that pure love with which his heart so fully abounds. And this is called true, divine, right, and perfect love, which passes no one by to choose out another, but embraces all alike. The other love proceeds from a heart that seeks only its own, and is full of the love, not of others, but of itself." (See Luther's Select Works, vol. i. p. 519.) The testimony of one who held so distinctly God's special love and electing grace, may clearly shew us that this view does not set aside these doctrines.

* Bishop Horsley has manifested THE WISDOM and LOVING-KINDNESS of that obscurity in which prophecy is veiled till fulfilled. He shews, that if prophecy be really of divine original, a part of the contrivance must be a mysterious disguise, by which the events of remote futurity, (such at least as depend on the free actions of men) are kept in a measure concealed. "Hence it follows that whatever private information the prophet might enjoy, the Spirit would never permit him to disclose the ultimate intent and particular meaning of the prophecy in the bare terms of the prediction." The conduct of our Lord towards the Apostles may illustrate this observation. He conversed with his disciples during the forty days that he was upon earth respecting the kingdom of God; but very little of those conversations are recorded. They might be needful for the Apostles themselves; but were not to be revealed to the church at large, except in the obscurer form given in the book of Revelation.

taken place in the general hope of the church, at all corresponded to the nature and blessedness of the Millennium set [295] before us in the 20th of Revelation, or the general prosperity of Christ's kingdom set forth throughout the holy scriptures.

There are various minuter points on which there does not appear to be the same light, which there is respecting the fact of a first resurrection: as whether there be a visible appearance, and visible reign of Christ and his saints, or an order in the resurrection of the righteous, (Dan. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 23), and whether there be an earlier and special resurrection of those who have suffered for Christ, (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; Rev. xx. 4; Phil. iii. 10, 11;) or whether, (as seems from Rev. xi. 18,) all the servants and saints of Christ, small and great, have their reward together; and on the general conflagration, it does not appear decisively, from any thing in St. Peter's account, in what part of that *day of judgment*, (2 Peter iii. 7.) the *day of the Lord*, which is *as a thousand years*, (2 Peter iii. 8,) it may take place: or whether there may not be, as some have supposed, a partial fire at the beginning, (2 Thess. i. 7, 8; Rev. xix. 20,) and another more complete at the close of that day. (Rev. xx. 9.) About the order of events foretold, and in what part of that order the new heavens and the new earth will take place, there is much of that obscurity in which unfulfilled events are purposely left.*

[296] The 19th chapter of Revelation reveals heaven opened, and our Lord explicitly and by name, on the white horse, coming personally to our earth! He comes to take vengeance on his enemies, and it is here foretold in terms similar to those which had been predicted before by Isaiah lxiii. The white horse revealed (ch. vi. 2) in the first seal has no such rider; but points out the first providential triumph of the church: (comp. Zech. vi. 2—5.) His people are as *his goodly horse in*

* The author has on every account felt it to be his duty, as far as he had opportunity to weigh the objections made against the præmillennial Advent and first resurrection, by Hall, Whitby, Vitranga, Faber, Hamilton, Gipps, &c. and difficulties which have arisen in his own mind, and he cannot but give his testimony that there is no plain scriptural argument which he can consider as conclusive, against the personal Advent of Christ, before the millennium and the resurrection of the saints at his coming. Many of those which have been judged to be objections, do in truth, tend, in his opinion, when carefully weighed, to confirm this sentiment; other objections only relate to peculiar views of individuals. It appears to him, that we have too much disregarded on the point, the sentiments of the early fathers, which were valuable and worthy of attention, renouncing, however, what was merely carnal either in the views, or reputed views, of some of them. The general answers which have been given to Whitby, by Rudd, Fleming, &c. and the writings of Mede, Cuninghame, Abdiel's Essays, Begg, Anderson, Greswell and others, contain answers to the objections, that make it unnecessary for him to enter farther into the controversy.

the day of battle. (Zech. x. 3.) We have in Rev. vi. 2. the church of God in its militant state of purity and conquest. We have in Rev. xix. 11, the "King of kings, and Lord of Lords," distinctly named, and going forth at the head of his armies, to the overthrow of all his enemies.

A few GENERAL REMARKS ON the passage in REVELATION, chapter xx. will now be added.

The passage alone reveals expressly the exact period of 1000 years, separating the first resurrection of the righteous from the resurrection of the wicked, and so marks more distinctly the pause between the work of mercy and judgment, but it is only one among many for the doctrine of the reign of the saints.

In the first three verses of the chapter all is simple narrative, excepting the key, the chain, and the dragon. The dragon is explained to mean the [297] devil; and authority and power is given to one of God's ministering spirits to bind this prince of darkness and seal him within the bottomless pit, his own proper abode. Those who believe the general testimony of God's word concerning angels and evil spirits can have no difficulty here.

In v. 4, two symbols only pass before the Apostle's eye, (*θρόνους*) thrones and (*ψυχας*) souls. The throne, the seat of kings, admits of no vague application to the peace, purity, and enlargement of the church, but is the plain emblem of judicial majesty and kingly power, exhibiting a glorious economy of righteous judgment and royal dominion. This accords with innumerable testimonies both of the Old and New Testament, (Dan. vii. 18, 27; xii. 1; Psalm xlix. 14; cxlix.; 2 Thess. i. 6—10; Isaiah xxiv. 21; xxvi. 21; xxvii. 1; Luke xxii. 29;) testifying of a visible and glorious dominion of righteousness, to be set up on this earth.

The persons seated on these thrones are those armies of heaven mentioned in the former chapter, who, clothed in white garments, have followed the Lamb to the marriage supper, and now share in his kingdom, and those who are called to join this general assembly and church of the first-born. *Judgment*, which denotes receiving or dispensing rewards or punishments, is given to them. (Psalm lxxii. 1; Isaiah xxxii. 1; Psalm cxlix.) This word has no uncertain meaning, but speaks of the faithful, true, and righteous judgment, (Rev. xix. 11; xi. 18; vi. 11; 2 Thess. i. 5—7,) in God's graciously giving reward to his servants, who has suffered for his name, and exalting the meek and martyred, to the office of kingly authority and righteous dominion. [298] It is to wrest the judgment of the poor in their cause, (Exodus xxiii. 6,) to pervert this promise

from its purpose of comfort to the persecuted and suffering saints of God, in favour of others who have known no persecution and endured no suffering.

The term *ψυχας*, rendered souls, seems employed by the Holy Spirit purposely to fix the meaning. Three terms are employed to denote the constitution of man, *πνευμα* spirit, *ψυχη* soul, and *σωμα* body, (1 Thess. v. 23.) Where sameness of character, or common principles, pervading a class or body of men are intended, *πνευμα*, or spirit, is employed. (Luke ix. 55; 1 Cor. vi. 17; Ephes. iv. 4; 1 Cor. xiv. 32; 1 John iv. 1; Rom. viii. 15.) It is the term employed when gifts of federal blessing to the church, and not personal rewards to its several members, are announced. Rev. xi. 11. If a figurative resurrection of principles and not of persons had been designed, the word *πνευμα* would certainly have been used. The term *ψυχη* is used with the same constancy to denote what in each man is distinctively personal, and therefore the subject of reward or punishment. Mark viii. 36; Matt. xvi. 26, 27; x. 39; Rom. ii. 9; 1 John iii. 16. We are thus assured that when the vision speaks of the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, it brings no message of vicarious blessings which Christians dwelling at ease are to receive as it were, by proxy, for the saints martyred of old, but of God's faithfulness and truth in rewarding with personal glory his once afflicted and suffering servants.

The passage in Rev. vi. 9—11 confirms this. In the sacrifices of the law, which were shadows of things in heaven, the blood of the sin-offering was poured [299] out at the bottom of the altar, and so the apostle in spirit here beholds the blood of the martyred saints poured out beneath the heavenly altar, and their cry for vengeance and retribution is heard ascending to the righteous Judge. Though the blood be a symbol, it is not a symbol, but a truth, that their cry does thus ascend, and that each is marked before him for reward and glory, but it is delayed till the number of the sufferers be full, on the sounding of the seventh angel, (Rev. xi. 18.) In Rev. xx. 4, we have the same souls of the martyred, but their cry has ceased, and they live and reign. O how far is it then from the truth that the martyrs and their rewards are symbolic, to be answered by their blood remaining unavenged, and a peaceful unsuffering church succeeding in their stead! We want faith in the account of the righteous judgment which is outstanding against the world, and only delayed by the long-suffering of God.

The particularity of Griesbach's readings of Rev. vi. 11, is worthy of attention; *εδωθη αυτοις, εκαστω στολη λευκη*,—there was given to them, to each one, a white robe. He gives each a several

token of his love, and an earnest of glory. The term, *οἱ νεκροί*, (Rev. xx. 4.) joined with the pronoun, *αὐτοίς* previously used, shews that it is the slain ones themselves whom the apostle states to have lived and reigned, and that the glory includes all who have escaped the brand of apostacy; it should have been included in the translation thus: *and whosoever had not worshipped the beast.*

The words *lived and reigned* remarkably correspond to those of the apostle. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him;" and oh, let us remember the annexed [300] warnings against denying him, and against unbelief! 1 Tim. ii. 11—13.

But, *they lived*, and the *rest of the dead lived not*. The dead are plainly divided into two classes, of which one was now raised, and the other after the thousand years were ended. It cannot refer to the *οἱ λοιποί*, of the former chapter, for those are living at the time they are described as the remnant. Rev. xix. 21. The two classes in Rev. xix. are described as sharers in guilt and punishment; but the two classes in Rev. xx. are contrasted—one as rewarded, and the other as punished. The first resurrection must then be literal. The term *νεκρός* clearly means the naturally dead, (Rev. xx. 12,) and the same class as the rest of the dead, and therefore means the naturally dead, (v. 5.) The first class then again, (Rev. xx. 4) must have been the subjects of a natural death and a natural resurrection.

The individuality of verse 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection," also excludes a figurative meaning.

These remarks furnish but a part of the proof which make it, in my mind, impossible that a spiritual and figurative resurrection, or any other than one real and literal, can be here intended by the Holy Spirit. O may we more dread wresting the promises of God, and slighting the great charter of the hopes of the first-born, than all the taunts or mockery of men.

While some have supposed that the day of the Lord as a thousand years, is an indefinite period, others have considered it as symbolical of 360,000 years. But it corresponds with the gracious purposes of God to guard his church from despondency, by [301] giving the time of suffering in veiled numbers, and to animate her with hope by giving the time of peculiar and special reward in explicit and plain statements. On this ground, on the general harmony of the time with God's Dispensations, on the express statement of St. Peter, expounding the day of the Lord as meaning a thousand years; and believing that the word *ετος* is not used symbolically, or for a larger period than a year (the word translated year, Rev. ix.

15, is *μιαυρον*), we may consider 1000 years to be the exact time of the millennium.

Respecting THE PERIOD OF THE CREATION OF THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH, a few farther remarks may be made. It has been shewn, in the scriptural account of time, that the day of the Lord is a period probably of 1000 years. The scriptures give several testimonies to the last fire, and the new heavens and the new earth, which should be compared together, in order to obtain a full and harmonious view of God's purposes.

It appears, from Isa. lxy. 17, that the new heavens and the new earth are connected with the restoration of the Jews, and their living in the flesh upon earth. It appears, from 2 Peter iii. 13, that this new heavens and new earth are connected with the burning of the earth; and it appears, from Rev. xxi. 1, that *there shall be no more sea*, is connected with this new heaven and new earth; but there is a sea, both symbolically and literally, to the close of the millennium. Rev. xx. 8. We may hence gather that these three accounts give us a view of the commencement, progress, and completion of the new heavens and the new earth. When completed, and not till then, there is no more sea.

[302] It appears, from Isaiah li. 16, that while God is planting the heavens, and laying the foundations of the earth, the Jews, having his word in their mouth, will be *covered in the shadow of his hand*; the saints also will, at the coming of the Lord, be caught up together with him, to meet the Lord in the air. It appears also that others of the nations, (Isaiah lxvi. 15—19. Rev. xxi. 24.) will escape in this fearful conflagration. But let us not rest in the mere visible outside view of these things. The great and spiritual change which God purposes hereby to effect is the point of chief importance. The visible, though real, must be viewed as the indication of the invisible; the new heavens, of the heavenly things attained by redemption, and the saints shining as "the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever;" and the new earth, though real, as the indication of the righteous nation of Israel, and at length of the universal righteousness which shall cover the world. We make it little more than a matter of curiosity, if we rest in the outside changes; we rise to the spiritual use and edification, by seeing the lessons which that outward change is designed to give us, of the real blessedness of holiness and entire conformity to God's will.

There are some original and valuable remarks on the millennium, in the Essays of the Rev. H. Woodward. In answer to the objection of the impossibility of the recurrence of

evil and opposition to God, after a long reign of righteousness, he shews the force of the law of opinion, and that the peculiar characteristic of that period will be that the law of opinion will then be on the side of holiness and of God; it being a state in which righteousness is ascendant, [303] and in which multitudes may outwardly conform, though not reconciled in heart and mind to the holy and happy order of things. He shews how inapplicable the scriptures of the New Testament, written for a tempted and suffering church, are to this state of things, and thence draws an argument for the personal advent of our Lord on earth, to open the very fountain from which the scriptures themselves have flowed, by which new streams may issue forth to water a renovated world, and make glad the city of God. From the promises of the Old Testament having been the hope of the church in all ages, he thinks it likely that they who have thus hoped, in past ages, shall through the first resurrection really share in the blessed fulfilment. He observes that there is a striking connection between the enlarged gift of the Spirit and the visible exhibition of the Saviour's glory; the Spirit's manifested power increasing precisely with the manifestations of Christ. He also states how the doctrine of the personal appearance of Christ with all his saints, clears up many difficulties which the actual state of the world presents to the mind, and gives a scheme calculated to vindicate the ways of Providence, and shew that this world will not always be left without a ruler and leader, whose voice none can misinterpret. From the usurpation of an infallible priesthood in Popery, and from the superhuman attributes usually ascribed to monarchs, he gathers the general sense of mankind that their case requires some superhuman power; that deep attachment of heart once given to men, shall at length, as justly due, be given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having now, then, cleared our way through the difficulties of this very important hope of the church [304] of Christ, let us rise above these mists of controversy, and view the subject in the way which the apostles set it before us. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" Titus ii. 13. "our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" Phil. iii. 20. "we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter iii. 13. O let not the differences of Christians keep us from this waiting state of mind; this blessed hope; this heavenly conversation; this glorious prospect. It is a reality; there is for

Christ's waiting people a crown of life and glory; there is a kingdom of light and love, and joy and blessedness; the Saviour will return, and that speedily, and raise his expecting people to be with him for ever. We shall not be ashamed of our hope. It will exceed our largest thoughts. Brethren in Christ, let us now be faithful to Christ; let us now confess him in the midst of the infidel world! let us now be willing to suffer for his sake. The day of suffering is short, the day of glory is one eternal day. It approaches, it is at the door. Let us, like the racer, eagerly hasten for the prize; let us "be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

[305] It is a just remark of Dr. Pye Smith, that "the prophecies respecting the kingdom of the Messiah, its extension and duration, and the happiness of his innumerable subjects, are in a much greater proportion than those which describe his humiliation to sufferings, and his dreadful death."

Indeed the universal reign of the triumphant Messiah, to the glory of God, is the grand result of God's dispensations. "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 10, 11.

The nature of the kingdom of Christ is a subject, then, of intense interest, and calls for distinct consideration. It has various aspects and circumstances; but still in all its forms the nature of this kingdom is substantially the same in its principle and character at all times. It is the reign of God over his creature man,—his supreme ascendancy over the heart,—and man's entire, willing, and joyful submission to him, and holy, filial, and happy communion with him. [306] Man is by nature under the bondage of sin and Satan, alienated from God, and at enmity with him. When a man is born again of water and of the Spirit, he sees the kingdom of God, and enters into it. Satan is resisted and dethroned—self is subdued, and God's will is our rule, our will, and our joy. This kingdom is within, and its blessings are *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. The Holy Spirit is, in the absence of Christ, the great administrator of this kingdom.

However different the extent and outward form of the kingdom; however great its ultimate triumph and glories, this is still its peculiar feature and character—God, the Saviour, reigning supreme in the heart of the once alienated and rebellious sinner; and all dispensations are but hastening on the more fully this great result, over all the earth.

The just view of the church of Christ now is that of a kingdom; and the person and character of **THE KING** gives unspeakable, universal and everlasting importance and glory to this kingdom. He is God's only begotten Son, one with God from the beginning, and yet he was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and so has brought our nature into union with God. Thus, through this King, there is restored again to a fallen race, in this day of salvation, liberty of access to God, and delightful communion with him, as our Almighty Father. God the Father communicates through God the Son, to all that ask, his own Holy Spirit, and thus gives us the unspeakable blessedness of adoption into the divine family, enabling us to cry, Abba, Father. This is the kingdom of God in its beginning on earth; we are admitted into it outwardly by baptism, a means and pledge of its inward blessings. [307] We partake of those blessings by regeneration, through faith, and so are made meet here, in the varied dispensations of providence and grace, for the inheritance of the saints in light. All other kingdoms are subject to our King, for "all power in heaven and earth is given to him," and he will finally be manifested to be "King of kings and Lord of lords. By him kings reign and princes decree justice."

The names of this kingdom are varied; it is called *the Kingdom of God*,* as he is the Originator and Author, and his glory its great object; *the kingdom of heaven*, as it is heavenly in its origin and principles; it comes down from heaven, and tends

* There is a very elaborate excursus by Koppe, on the phrase *the Kingdom of God*, in which he goes through all the principal passages, containing the phrase in the New Testament, whether spoken before the birth of Christ, or by Christ himself, in his life, or his Apostles afterwards, and shews that they must not be understood merely of the Christian religion or church, or of the spiritual and invisible power by which Christ defends his church on earth, but of a kingdom yet to be set up by the Messiah. He first states that the Apostles adopted the phrase from the sacred writings, and the familiar discourses of the Jews, and refers to Psalm ii. xlv. cx. Isaiah ix. xi. xxv. 8. xxviii. 5. xlii. xlix. 6. lli. liii. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. xxx. xxxi. xxxiii. 15. Ezek. xvii. 22. xxix. 21. xxxvii. 24. Hosea iii. 5. Micah iv. v. Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12. ix. 9. xiv. 9. Mal. iii. 1. Dan. ii. 44. vii. 13, 14. ix. 24—27. He shews that from these predictions, the Jews expected that the future king, or Messiah, was to restore the true worship of Jehovah, from which men in former ages had all gone astray; to strengthen their minds that they may keep it fast; to reform their conduct, expiate the sins of his people, and to suffer much, being neglected by the greater part of his nation; nevertheless that the same Messiah, sustained by divine power, should with splendour and majesty truly royal and divine,

to unite earth and heaven; it is *the kingdom of Christ*, as he is the reigning Monarch; and *the kingdom of* [308] *Israel*, as the Jews are to have a pre-eminence arising from the glory of their king, (Isa. lix. 20, 21, and lx.); and *the everlasting kingdom*, as the happiness of those belonging to it will endure for ever.

From the very beginning, the scripture prophecies, not obscurely intimate this kingdom, in such predictions as these—"the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent:" (Gen. iii. 15.) "in thee and thy seed shall all the kingdoms of the earth be blessed:" xxii. 18. "unto him shall the gathering of the people be:" xlix. 10. "out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." Num. xxiv. 19.

In the Psalms of David, and in the promises made to him, we have a clear developement of this kingdom. See 2 Sam. vii. 10—16; Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 29, 36, 37; Psalm ii. lxxii. cx. &c. &c. These promises assured the throne of Israel to David's posterity for ever, by the strongest possible confirmation; and shew that his seed would be the long-promised and expected Messiah.

In the Prophets we have a still farther display of the glories and extent of the same kingdom. See Isaiah xxxii. lx. &c.; and it was still assured to David's seed, "If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David, my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.

But through the sins of Israel, the times of the Gentiles were to come in, and a suspension of the actual reign of any kings, till the Messiah should come, was foretold. When the throne was overturned in the person of Zedekiah, Ezekiel was commissioned [309] to utter this memorable prediction against that last reigning king of Judah: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same. Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high: I will overturn, overturn, overturn, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him." Ezek. xxi. 26.

When our Lord was about to be born, the promise was by the angel directly applied to him as his right, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he

govern his people, make war against their enemies, and free them from the yoke of a foreign power, and at length claim the empire of the world (in which the Romans then boasted) for his own nation; along with the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom, the Jews expected the end of the present condition of human beings, and the resurrection of the pious from the dead. See Koppe on Thessalonians, and Investigator, vol. ii. p. 208.

shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 32, 33.

That these promises yet remain to be chiefly fulfilled, we judge from the following considerations,—1. Christ has never sat on the throne of David.—2. He has never reigned over the house of Jacob.*—3. Daniel predicts that his kingdom should be established on the ruins of the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire, (Dan. ii. 42—44.)—4. The Apostles were told, that the time for restoring the kingdom to Israel was reserved in the Father's power.—5. All Christ's disciples have daily to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

There is, however, a preparatory and SPIRITUAL KINGDOM already established. Our Lord tells the Jews again and again, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He compares it to "a field where tares and wheat [310] grow together till harvest." Matt. xiii. 30. He warned them: "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," xxi. 43. When men are truly converted, they are said to be "delivered from the kingdom of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," Col. i. 13. We must not therefore lose sight of this spiritual kingdom. It is the bud before the flower. It is the growing of the seed before the harvest. It is the preparatory state of the kingdom; but it is not the power—it is not the full glory of the kingdom.

Of the origin of his kingdom our Lord speaks, when in answer to the question of Pilate, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he replies, "My kingdom is not of this world—now is my kingdom not from hence:" and when asked again, "Art thou a king?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king, to this end was I born; and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth." John xviii. 33—37. His kingdom is not of this world, but heavenly in its origin, in its support, in its end; the death of the Lord ended it not, for he rose, and ascended, and reigns on his Father's throne, till he returns in the glory of his Father, and proves by his divine majesty visibly to all, that his kingdom is of different principles and character from those of this world. 1 Tim. vi. 12—16.

* The Jews rejected our Lord when he first came (Luke xvii. 25.) and his *shining as lightning from one part under heaven to the other*, was to be after that (verse 24). A period is predicted, when they shall see him again, and shall say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*. Matt. xxiii. 39. It is admitted, that we know little of the way in which Christ shall reign over them; but we have seen nothing yet that meets the plainness and fulness of the promises.

Of the spiritual kingdom he tells the Pharisees, *it cometh not with observation*, but was then in the midst of them; while he tells his disciples in private, on the same occasion, they should *desire to see one of the days of the Son of man*, and yet *not see it*, and they need not go after those saying, *See here, or see there*, for the Son of man in his day should be visible, even [311] as “the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven and shineth unto the other part under heaven.”

The code of laws, as it were, regulating this spiritual kingdom, were given by our Lord in his sermon on the Mount. The anticipations of suffering, sacrifice and self-denial are everywhere set before the disciples, and the full recompense of reward only hereafter. Sorrow and tribulation are pointed out as the present path of the Christian. For the sake of the world, the day of vengeance on the wicked (as well as the day of glory for the righteous) is deferred.

There is a remarkable difference to be observed between our Lord's statements of the kingdom of heaven at the beginning, and at the close of his ministry. At the beginning of his ministry he says *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. (Matt. iv. 17.) and so when he sent out the disciples they were to preach, *the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*. Luke x. 11. But as his ministry drew to its close, on his last journey to Jerusalem, he checked their hopes that *the kingdom of God should immediately appear*, and told them of his previous absence and return from *a far country*, (Luke xix. 11, 12.) and that the kingdom should not *be nigh* till *the times of the Gentiles* had been fulfilled. Luke xxi. 24—31. Thus, on his resurrection he deferred also their hopes to a distant period. Acts i. 6—8. Indeed, till the Jews had rejected their true Lord and King, the kingdom could not be said to be far off; as their rejection became more marked, the delay in the full establishment of the kingdom was made more plain. Yet our Lord still left, as we may see in his expression respecting John's tarrying till he came, (John xx. 21.) no clear light as to the lengthened delay of his return. Bengelius [312] refers this expression to his receiving the Apocalypse as a manifestation of Christ.*

The opposing statements harmonized also in this—THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SPIRIT was at hand; the trials, the conflicts, the sacrifices were all near, and the spiritual blessings, gifts and graces, and the hope of glory were all to be immediately enjoyed by faith. The gift of the Holy Ghost, the striving to enter, the ministers, the sacraments, the translation from the kingdom of darkness, the labours of Christ, the seed-time of

* See also the author's notes on the expression, 'I come,' in his *Chief Concerns of Man*, 4th edition, p. 246.

glory, the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the one bond of love, these very elements and beginnings of the future glory were all brought to them at his first coming. But the **VISIBLE KINGDOM OF GOD** was distant, the crown of glory, the recompense of reward, the reigning with Christ, was, for infinitely wise, gracious, and holy ends, not to come soon.

But as the Jews lost sight of the Gentile election and spiritual kingdom, predicted by their prophets, so Christians seem to have lost sight of **THE VISIBLE KINGDOM OF EARTH**, yet to come. Dan. vii. 27.

So far from disregarding the spiritual kingdom, many modern writers have thought that it is the **only** kingdom of Christ on earth, and that the spiritual triumphs of the gospel before the thousand years, and its full and universal success during that period, is the full and only establishment of this kingdom of Christ in this world. This was the author's view for a lengthened period, till compelled by scriptural evidence, (as has been already laid before the reader, under the head of the coming of Christ) to abandon it as untenable.

[313] The instructions and parables of our Lord lead us to think that, till his return, the church will be distinct from the world; and that till then, there will be no universal reception of his gospel. It is impossible, in the author's view, to harmonize the various statements of scripture, and the expectations held out to believers through the epistles, of a kingdom yet to come, on the system of a merely spiritual and universal kingdom.

The remarkable question on this subject, put by the apostles to our Lord, deserves particular attention. After he had been *speaking to them* (Acts i.) during the forty days that he was seen of them, *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, their minds were so excited, that the very last question which we read of their proposing to him before his ascension was, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* His reply was, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own

* The connection of the kingdom given to Israel, and the kingdom of God, is brought before us here and in various Old Testament prophecies, though the exact nature of the connection, and the identity or difference of these kingdoms, is yet veiled in the obscurity of unfulfilled prophecy. It appears from Isaiah, that after the Redeemer comes to Zion, (Isa. lix. 20. Rom. xi. 26,) and *the glory of the Lord is risen upon her, the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.* The prophet declares *the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee;* and asserts, *the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted,* (Isaiah lx. 5, 12;) and Zechariah connects with *the coming of our Saviour and his saints,* (Zech xiv. 8.) *living waters going forth from Jerusalem;* and then the blessed truth: *The Lord shall be king over*

power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me," &c.

Our Lord's answer at first seems discouraging and darkening to their hopes, and yet, like other apparently [314] dark answers, it is full of profitable thoughts. The very darkness may shew that he could not mean to speak of a *merely spiritual* kingdom; there was no reason to withhold from them the fact of the time and season of its commencement; that had already commenced, and of the increase of that he tells them explicitly in the promise which he, in his answer, gives, "of the Holy Ghost coming upon them."

The very question is instructive. When we remember that he had just been "opening their understanding to understand the scriptures," (Luke xxiv. 45,) and conversing with them "for forty days on the kingdom of God," (Acts i. 3.); it is most improbable that they should still have had a visionary notion about its establishment, or if they had, that at such a moment he should have left them under the power of so serious an error.

The words, however, encourage their hopes; just as he had done in the whole of his discourses, from the early promise, Matt. v. 3, (see Psalm xxxvii.) to the fuller glory assured them, Luke xxii. 29, 30. He says, the *Father hath put in his own power, the times and seasons of restoring again the kingdom*; then might the apostles justly conclude, it will again be [315] restored. It is similar to the answer given to the mother of Zebedee's children; that the right and left hand seats in his kingdom should be given to them for whom it was prepared of his Father, (Matt. xx. 23.)

Infinite wisdom marks these replies. Look back. We stand on the eminence of eighteen centuries. See what those centuries have been. Generation after generation, Apostles, Martyrs, Fathers, Confessors, and Reformers have lived; view their conflicts, labours, sufferings, persecutions, and cruel deaths.

all the earth in that day; there shall be one Lord, and his name one. Zech. xiv. 9.

We doubt not, whatever first-fruits may have been given, the fulness of these promises is yet to flow in at the latter-day glory of the church. In another place, our Lord connects *the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud, the redemption of his people drawing nigh, and the kingdom of God being nigh at hand.* Luke xxi. 27, 28, 31.

An objection has been made by Archbishop Whately to the temporal restoration of the Jews, with pre-eminence above the Gentiles, from the parable of the Labourers, (Matt. xx. 12—16.) each receiving the same sum. We must not set aside plain predictions by a parable we dimly understand. Earthly privileges may be given, with a pre-eminence and visible glory to the Jew; while heavenly things may be the common privilege of Jew and Gentile.

See the rise of Popery and Mahomedanism; the dark ages; the reviving and quenching again of light; the struggles of infant Protestantism, and its subsequent decay, and the spread of infidelity over countries professedly Christian: oh! had the apostles been plainly told all this, what needless despondency, what heart-sinkings, must have overwhelmed them! 1800 years of deferred expectation; 1800 years of Israel's dispersion and the treading down of Jerusalem; 1800 years to come of the Gentile monarchies; with what wisdom this prolonged scene of darkness and sorrow was kept from them, by the very obscurity of the reply! while they were shewn at the same time, that the kingdom would come at the precise period when GOD THE FATHER, infinite in wisdom and boundless in love, should see to be best.

Our Lord manifestly designed that his church should never be without the lively hope of his coming the second time. That his church might have a waiting Spirit, and all the benefits of a prepared, watchful, and hopeful state of mind, the times of the kingdom were not fully revealed, even when the [316] sealed book was given to the Lamb, and the seals opened by him; the obscurity is only to be removed at the time of the end, (Dan. xii. 4, 9; Rev. xxii. 10,) that thus the church might ever pour out the fervent prayer, "This kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Our Lord's kingdom is then yet to be fully established.

It may be well to make this still clearer; for the power and coming of our Lord to establish such a kingdom, was esteemed of old *a cunningly-devised fable*, (2 Peter i. 16,) and has been too much lost sight of.

Our Lord tells his disciples, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works;" language that can only be applied to his second personal and visible coming. He then immediately proceeds expressly to assure his disciples, (Matt. xvi. 27, 28,) that *some standing* with him should *not taste of death* till they had seen the "Son of man coming in his kingdom," or (as Mark ix. 1,) the "kingdom of God come with power;" and then *six days after*, (Matt. xvii. 1, &c.) he takes Peter, James, and John *into a high mountain apart*, and is *transfigured before them*,—*his face shines as the sun*,—*his raiment is white as the light*,—*Moses and Elias appear with him in glory*, and *speak of his decease*, his disciples witness these things,—and Peter says, *it is good to be here*. Then a cloud overshadows them, and a voice is heard from it, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

We have here then the liveliest display of the coming of

Christ's kingdom with power, of which we can at present form a conception. This view is [317] greatly confirmed by the allusion of St. Peter to it. After exhorting Christians (2 Peter i. 11,) to every excellence by the animating motive—"so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ," he tells them, (verses 16—19,) "we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount; we have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, (or shine out,) and the day-star arise in your hearts." The power and coming cannot be applied here merely to the miracles of his first coming, when he came, not in majesty, but in humiliation; they are connected by Peter, not with those, but with his transfigured and glorious body on the Mount, and the glorified bodies of Moses and Elijah appearing with him; his coming, in fact, "in the glory of his Father 'with his angels,'" (Matt. xvi. 27,) as is indeed more fully set forth in the 3d chapter of 2nd Peter.

Again, it is not till the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, that there are great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever." Rev. xi. 15.

The return of our Lord is the season of THE FULL ESTABLISHMENT of his kingdom. It takes place at the coming of Christ, (Dan. vii. 13, 14, with Matt. xxvi. [318] 64; 2 Tim. iv. 1;) but this could not be at the birth of our Saviour, nor at the destruction of Jerusalem, for there was no judgment in, or destruction of, the Roman empire at that time, (Dan. ii. 45; vii. 26.) It was to become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, Dan. ii. 35; but we know that empire subsisted in its glory for centuries after the first coming of Christ. That this kingdom is not merely a heavenly glory, but one to be established on earth, is clear also from Daniel's plain prediction, chap. vii. 27, "The kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The expressed hope of the church is,

"Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. v. 10.

Our Lord Christ is the acknowledged, and only supreme monarch of this kingdom. What may be the manifestations of his glory we know not. There was a visible appearance of the divine glory in the Holy of Holies under the Jewish Theocracy, and many have supposed that there will be a similar appearance in the administration of this kingdom. The hope of the Christian Dispensation is, however, far more excellent than that of the Jewish; "if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." 2 Cor. iii. 7—12. The different descriptions given of Jerusalem, one in the 40th and following chapters of Ezekiel, and the other in the 21st and 22d of Revelation, have led many to think that there will be two Jerusalems; one heavenly, of which we know that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it," (Rev. xxii. 23,) and the other earthly, of [319] which it is also true, "the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there." Ezek. xlviii. 35. It has indeed been said, because our Lord told the woman of Samaria, "Believe me the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father," that the literal temple would never be built for worship at Jerusalem. But our Lord's prediction has already received its sad accomplishment in this hour or season. In the kingdom to come, it may be far different. That is of an everlasting duration. Ezek. xliii. 7. When Nathanael calls our Lord, "the Son of God, and the King of Israel," (John i. 48—50,) our Saviour tell him, "Verily I say unto you, ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;" this has yet to be fulfilled; and however we may accommodate it to spiritual intercourse with heaven, and spiritual blessings bestowed through Christ, it sets before us a communication between heaven and earth, through the Son of Man, far more glorious than anything which has yet been realized.*

[320] There is therefore a visible and glorious kingdom of Christ, yet to exist on this our earth, with infinitely more holiness, spirituality, and blessedness, than any thing that the world has yet seen. The saints, raised at the coming of Christ, and

* Some statements of Mr. Mede shew that he was rather disposed to err on the side of caution than of rashness. He says, (Works pp. 603, 604,) "The presence of Christ in his kingdom shall no doubt be glorious and evident, yet I dare not so much as imagine, which some ancients seem to have thought, that it should be a visible CONVERSE upon earth. For the kingdom of Christ ever has been and shall be *Regnum Cœlorum*, a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven. There he was installed where he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, (Heb. i.) and there as in his proper

changed, and made like him, (1 Thess. iv. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 52—54.) shall share its glories and reign with him, (Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 28—30; Rom. viii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. iv. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 1—4.)

The thousand years' reign of the saints, is not mentioned to limit their reign for that time; it is perfectly clear that *they shall reign for ever and ever*. (Dan. vii. 18;) but it is mentioned to shew that at the end of that period, there shall be among the nations then living in the flesh, another rebellion of Satan, to himself and his followers, fatally ruinous, but utterly ineffective to overthrow the kingdom of the saints; and that after that time, he shall be for ever shut up in the lake of fire, and they shall reign in *uninterrupted* glory through eternity, (Rev. xxii. 5,) in that [321] kingdom where *God shall be all in all*; the millennial kingdom is but a preparatory step to the everlasting kingdom.

We pretend not to describe what is meant by the language expressive of reigning, or in what way our Lord may be visible, and sit on the throne of David, or what part the glorified saints will have in the future kingdom of Christ; but it is clear that God has promised that they shall share its blessedness and glories, and holds this out as an animating motive to fidelity. 2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. ii. 10; iii. 11, 21; v. 10; 1 Cor. ix. 25. We must not let infidelity, we must not let Satan and the world, rob us of this hope.

God is, "in the ages to come, to shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ."

temple is continually to appear in the presence of his Father, to make intercession for us. Rom viii. 34; Heb. ix. 24. Yet may we grant that he shall appear and be visibly revealed from heaven, especially for the calling and gathering of his ancient people, for whom he did so many wonders in the days of old." He proceeds to prove this by our Lord's words, Matt. xxiv. and Rev. i. 7, compared with and founded on Dan. vii. 13, and Zech. xii. 10.

"Those who shall be partakers of this kingdom are described to be of two sorts: 1. *The deceased martyrs*, who, (as far as I can yet understand,) shall resume their bodies and reign in heaven: 2. Such of the *living*, as have not worshipped the beast, nor his image, neither have received his mark, these shall reign on earth, for so I construe the words. Rev. xx. 4.

"This rising of the martyrs is that which is called the first resurrection, being, as it seems, a prerogative to their sufferings above the rest of the dead; who, as they suffered with Christ in the time of his patience, so should they be glorified with him in the reign of his victory before the universal resurrection of all: *Blessed and holy are they who have part in the first Resurrection, for on them the second death hath no power*, namely, because they are not in *via*, but in *patria*, being a prerogative, as I understand it, of this sort of reigners only. Thus I yet admit the first resurrection to be corporal, as well as the second, though I confess I have much striven against it."

The presence of our Lord both in earth and in heaven is confessedly mysterious; but John iii. 13 may shew us that there is no inconsistency in both being true.

Eph. ii. 7. A participation of the glories of Christ's kingdom is the expressed general expectation of believers in the New Testament; those who are *rich in faith* are, as St. James shews, "heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him." James ii. 5. If we are now only heirs, it is clear that we do not possess it.

In its services, the church of England sets before us this hope, from the first instruction in our catechism, that we are "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven;" to the last prayer pronounced over the bodies of the departed,* "That it may please thee shortly to accomplish [322] the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that we, and all those departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory."

This, too, as has been sufficiently shewn, was the general hope of the church in the first centuries after Christ. The testimony of Justin Martyr is above all exception on this point, that "as many Christians as were in every respect orthodox, were assured that they who believe in Christ should rise in the flesh, and for the space of a thousand years inhabit Jerusalem, rebuilt, and beautified, and enlarged." Tertullian had the same hope, and he connects this hope with the restoration of the Jews, saying, "It becomes the Christian not to grieve, but to rejoice, in the restoration of the Jew, inasmuch as all our hope is joined, or united with the remaining expectation of the Jew."†

[323] Let us then *have* like Moses, *respect to the recompense*

* The intermediate state of the soul has occupied much of the attention of Christian divines. The place of departed spirits called in Hebrew *שְׁאוֹל*, in Greek, *αἴης*, and in English Hell, means the invisible receptacle of the dead. Peter says of our Lord, *his soul was not left in hell, (αἴης,) nor did his flesh see corruption*; where there is a contrast between his soul being in the invisible state, and his flesh in the grave. The invisible state consists of two parts, a place of rest and blessedness, *paradise* for the righteous, (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4,) and a place of torment for the wicked. Luke xvi. 23. *Gehenna* is the term used to describe the state of the wicked exclusively, hereafter, Matt. v. 29; xxiii. 15; Mark ix. 43, &c. Respecting the conscious happiness of the spirits of the just between death and the resurrection, such passages as Luke xxiii. 43; Phil. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 8, put it out of all doubt; but of the nature of that happiness, not only the silence of the scripture, but the very terms of the Hebrew, Greek, and English words, which name it, *שְׁאוֹל* (a concealed state), *αἴης* (from, not seen), *hell*, a Saxon word, meaning hidden or concealed (see Parkhurst,) shew us how little we can possibly know of it, and how far short it must be of the promised glory which is so largely described. The opinions of the Fathers on this subject are given in a note on 2 Tim. iv. 8, by Whitby. See also the Investigator, vol. iv. p. 178—180. There is a very elaborate discussion on Hades, in the last volume of Greswell's work on the Parables, to which the reader may refer.

* See the Bishop of Lincoln's Justin Martyr, p. 104, and Tertullian, page 366, 367.

of reward. Heb. xi. 26. Let us, like Abraham, “look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Heb. xi. 10. Let us, like all the Patriarchs confess, that we *are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; desire and seek a better country, that is, a heavenly, where God has prepared for us a city.* Heb. xi. 13—16. They did “not receive the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect.” Heb. xi. 39, 40. To that *better thing* we are come now in faith, and soon shall come in full enjoyment. “Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;” (Heb. xii. 22—24,) and then after enumerating the glorious company there assembled, he says, “and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Let us get hold of the last link of this glorious chain—let us obtain an interest in the blood of sprinkling now—and all the other blessings shall, in the fulness of time, be possessed by us. “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.” 1 John v. 11, 12.

All is now disjointed, sickly, weak, and failing in its designed effect. Remedies multiply wants and defects; “that which is crooked cannot be made straight; that which is wanting cannot be numbered;” Eccl. i. 15. the best planned institutions, the best laws, through the corruption of man and the power of Satan, disappoint our hopes. The law itself *was weak through the flesh.* Rom. viii. 3. No one adequately fulfils his relation to another; even the conscience of the Christian leads him constantly to-condemn himself. Magistrates, ministers, husbands, wives, parents, [324] children, teachers, learners, servants, dependants, all fail in their relative duties in some point or other. Our comforts occasion our trials, and our very joys bringsorrows. But *the times of the Restitution* (ἀποκαταστάσις) *of all things* is hastening on: when not by the policy and wisdom of man, but by the effectual grace and loving kindness of God our Saviour, they shall be restored to a state of sound health: when the disjointed members shall be made whole, as the withered hand by our Lord, (Matt. xii. 13.) or the blind eyes which were restored by his goodness to perfect sight. Mark viii. 25. And how the sacred writers glow with the bright anticipations of such a period, we may see in Isaiah xi. xxxv. lx. &c. May it fill our minds in the proportion in which it fills the divine records; and especially may we view it as the time when HOLINESS and SPIRITUALITY shall be everywhere triumphant on earth, (Zech. xiii. 9; xiv. 20, 21; Isaiah lii. 1; lx. 21; Joel

iii. 17.) and as a stimulating MOTIVE to the most zealous and active discharge of all our PRESENT DUTIES.

The kingdom of God, through unbelief, appears so distant as hardly to be of any moment or importance to us, but real faith sees in it a character and magnitude according with the fulness in which it is brought forward in the pages of scripture. Just as a man living upon the earth, thinks every object on the earth great and important, in comparison of the sun, or of the stars: but supposing him to rise gradually above the earth, and approach the sun or the stars: the earth would sink into its physical insignificance, and the glory of those greater worlds fill his whole soul: so it is with this kingdom, its supposed distance makes us think it of little moment; but the day [325] is hastening on, when it shall occupy every mind, and engage every heart, and *the knowledge of the glory of the Lord* fill the earth *as the waters cover the sea.* Isa. xi. 9. It is the property of the scriptures, and faith in them, to bring distant and unseen things before our minds in their just and real proportions.

We would now refresh our minds by attempting to realize the coming of this *kingdom with power*, (Mark ix. 1,) as set before us in varied scriptures. Think of the spirits of the just in the invisible world, even now in their separate state, happy with Christ, but expecting a far completer happiness. View the saints on earth groaning under a body of sin and death; having the first fruits of the spirit, but waiting for deliverance from their many burdens and sorrows: to both these parts of the one family of Christ in heaven and earth, his coming is infinitely desirable. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. xv. 51. The Lord himself, (1 Thess. iv. 16.) *descending from heaven with a shout*, in his glorious body shining, as when transfigured on the Mount, with a light above the sun: the voice of the archangel speaks; and first *the dead in Christ*, the bodies of the saints, now as seed sown in the earth, lost and covered in its dust, shall rise in glory, and join their long separated spirits. Quick as thought, the angels, with eager and joyful haste, catch up those who are alive and remain, and take them with the risen saints to the clouds *to meet the Lord in the air.* Immediately each body is transfigured, changed, and fashioned like unto the Lord's glorious body; "according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all [326] things to himself." Phil. iii. 21. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption—it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory—it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body;" it bore *the image of the earthly*—in

a moment it is changed, and bears *the image of the heavenly*. 1 Cor. xv.

O transporting change! imagine the weak, sickly frame of a poor believer, burdened with sin, harassed by temptations, worn down by labour, buffeted, scorned, and persecuted, despised and afflicted,—in an instant, delivered out of all, and raised thus beauteous, powerful, and glorious; throwing off at once, all the mortal wrappings which confined him in his earthly house of this tabernacle, and, as the chrysalis, that striking emblem, bursting forth in the splendour of his new creation to bask in the beams of the *Sun of Righteousness*, and to enjoy all the glories of the “new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Peter iii. 13.

Who can conceive too, our meeting the Lord, and his welcome! Who can realize the purifying, exalting, enrapturing emotions of him to whom the Lord says, as he comes into his presence, “Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Matt. xxv. 21. There he *presents* his redeemed and glorified people “faultless before the presence of the Divine Glory with exceeding joy.” Jude 24. O the unutterable bliss of *seeing God as he is, and beholding him, face to face*, and knowing *as we are known*!

Welcomed by the Lord, the glorified saints mingle with the innumerable hosts of heaven, as one in the [327] blessed family above, never to be separated—all being *kings and priests unto God and his Father*, who shall sit with their Saviour King on his throne. Thus the *heirs of God and the joint heirs with Christ*, enter on “the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.” Matt. xxv. 34.

Nor are saints merely our companions there. The whole family in heaven is one. O glorious assembly! “the innumerable company of angels; the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven; the spirits of just men made perfect,” (united now to their glorified bodies,) and *Jesus himself, the Mediator of the New Covenant*. Heb. xii. 22—24. What a gathering is this!

Among this blessed people the Saviour distributes his rich rewards, *giving to every man according as his work hath been*; and how infinitely will the lowest reward exceed the largest hopes of his people! All the *faithful* shall have given to them *a crown of life*, (Rev. ii. 10;) all *that love his appearing*, wear the *crown of righteousness*, (2 Tim. iv. 8;) the elders who were *examples to the flock*, shall “receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away: they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,

and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3.

Contemplate that innumerable and truly glorious society. See the righteous, equal to the angels; behold them all "shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," (Matt. xiii. 43;) or in the sublime imagery of Revelation—"I looked, and lo a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads; and I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of [328] many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps, and they sung as it were a new song before the throne." Rev. xiv. 1—3.

But even the inspired language manifestly labours and fails in the closing chapters of Revelation, to convey adequate ideas of the splendours of the "Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. The twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.—The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass: there is no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." See Rev. xxi. 10 to xxii. 6.

And then we may conceive another part of their blessedness is to be employed in making others blessed, "for the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it." Rev. xxi. 24—26. This accords with other promises. "We shall reign on the earth. The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Dan. vii. 18.

[329] The blessedness of the kingdom of God, terminates not merely in the glorified saints being happy in their own glory, and the vision of the Lord; the whole earth, after those purifying judgments which shall come upon it, has the deepest interest in it. It is sublimely represented as now waiting for it with earnest longing. Rom. viii. 19—23. In this passage

there is a clear distinction between a blessedness to be given in the *manifestation of the sons of God*, and another blessing in the deliverance of the creation at large *from the bondage of corruption*. Respecting the final abode of the saints, we have no reason to think that it will be confined, more than the angelic abode has been, to one region of God's creation. The idea of a spirit locally confined is unscriptural, (Ezek. i. 20.) and the saints will be glorified spirits then. The angels dwell in heaven (Matt. xviii. 10. Mark xii. 25.) and yet are ministering spirits also on earth. Heb. xii. 14. And so the glorified saints may have their blessedness both in the new heavens (2 Cor. v. 1. Col. i. 5.) and the new earth. Rev. xxi. 1. Their heaven is where Christ is. John xvii. 24. There are indeed but two leading distinct classes of men in the coming kingdom of Christ. (1.) The glorified saints, or the heavenly Jerusalem, and (2.) the Jewish and other nations, the Jewish having a superiority over the nations of the earth at large. But the holiness, blessedness and glory of the risen saints is far beyond that of the Jewish or any other nation on the earth. Rev. xx. 4; xxi. 24.* O how large and full [330] are all those glowing promises, which bespangle the firmament of scripture as the stars do the heavens, of the latter-day glory of our Lord's kingdom on earth; the animating hopes set before us in such Psalms as the lxvii. lxxii. xcvi. to c., when knowledge, peace, holiness, and universal happiness shall bless the whole world. The rich treasures with which the latter chapters of Isaiah are loaded, and the glories which are testified of through the sacred writings, have here ample space for their largest meaning. The whole world will indeed be blessed when under the happy dominion of our Lord and his glorified saints.

Christian reader! let us thirst after this glory. Christian reader! let us count every thing besides as loss—that we may win Christ and be found in him.

What motives are here set before us, for the greatest exertions in doing good! The future glory is eminently connected with labours for Christ, (Dan. xii. 3; Luke xix. 16—19; 2 Cor. x. 6.)—oh what full scope there is in this kingdom for the largest rewards, and what an exciting object for hope and exertion! What motives also for patient endurance of sufferings in this present life! So intimately are sufferings and this glory joined together, that some have thought the Millennial

* It is surprising to see how many still speak against the pre-millennial advent, as if hostile to the Dispensation of the Spirit and the priesthood of Christ. See the author's answer to the first objection in the note in his Occasional Works, p. 574. And see Cox's Christ our High Priest, in answer to the second objection.

Kingdom was only for *sufferers*, (Rom. viii. 18; Acts xiv. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. vii. 14; xx. 4); but be it for all (Rev. xi. 18.) the sufferers are those most eminently marked by the divine Spirit as the heirs of this bliss. May we ever be ready, then, to rejoice in the cross. Matt. v. 11, 12.

When we look at these glories, no wonder that the work of *salvation* is to be wrought out "with fear and [331] trembling:" (Phil. ii. 12.) no wonder that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force," (Matt. xi. 12.) and *every man* that really would secure it *presseth into it*. Luke xvi. 16. It is a prize worth all the ardour of *the race that is set before us*, (Heb. xiii.) and all the struggle of *fighting the good fight of faith*: (1 Tim. vi. 12.) it is worth parting with *the eye, the hand, or the foot*, (Matt. xviii. 8, 9.) or *even life itself*, (Luke xiv. 26; Rev. xii. 11,) rather than forfeit *our lot at the end of the days*, (Dan. xii. 13,) in the heavenly kingdom and inheritance. The Lord inspire all our hearts with a noble ardour and thirst after this, as our best aim, our proper rest, our eternal riches, glory, and blessedness; so that for the sake of this we may willingly go through every previous sacrifice!

On the review of all these things, may our hearts be led to offer up with fervency of desire, that prayer, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

[332] One design of the Author in the preceding remarks, has been to excite A DUE ATTENTION TO PROPHECY. An exclusive and speculative regard to it leads to a dangerous shutting out of primary and important duties, and to controversies and divisions; but the subject of prophecy makes so large a portion of scripture, that no one can *slight* it, without disobeying the plain direction of searching the scriptures. There have, indeed, been so many opposing interpretations, and so much self-confident and controversial statement of prophetic views, that Christians are really in danger of contemning that which God requires them to take heed to, (2 Peter i. 19.) neglecting

that, on the reading, hearing and keeping of which he has pronounced a blessing. Rev. i. 3. We gain a real help to spirituality by the study of the prophecies of this book. To teach otherwise, Bengelius calls "a spurious and unblest attempt at spiritual refinement."

Only let us attend to it in the spirit of prayer, humility, forbearance, practical application, patient research, and waiting; suspending our judgment in doubtful matters, and being open to conviction, and we shall find the study of prophecy very quickening to [333] our souls, cheering to our spirits, and animating us to the diligent discharge of all our duties. We shall *keep* as well as *read* the things written. Rev. i. 3.

The PRACTICAL APPLICATION of prophecy is a point of very vital importance. When our Lord and the apostles interpreted the prophecies, they joined with them the immediate use and practical application to the hearers. Has not this been too much neglected? In our eagerness to establish what we have considered the true view, have we not sometimes lost sight of the important personal benefit of the prophecy? Prophecy, in all its parts, is full of the most holy and varied practical instruction.

The leading benefit designed by the sacred writers in bringing forward prophetic truth seems, however, to be this: by exciting our hopes and our fears, to lead us to fly to Christ, without delay, for an interest in his great salvation. The broad letters on the sign-post of prophecy every where are "Fly to Jesus;" the hand stretched out every where directs to Jesus. Observe how St. Peter, after explaining the prophetic meaning of various passages in the Psalms, (Acts ii. 14—36,) by the stimulating hope of *the remission of sins*, and *the gift of the Holy Ghost*, (ii. 38.), and by the fear of perishing with *an untoward generation*, (ii. 40); calls them at once to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Observe how St. Paul, in pleading with the Jews at Antioch, in Pisidia, after explaining the voices of the prophets, (Acts xiii. 23—37.) comes to a practical exhortation, by holding out all the blessings of "*forgiveness* and *justification* to the *believers in Jesus*, (verses 38, 39.), and all the terror of perishing to the *unbeliever*. (verses 40, 41.)

[334] The great practical lessons of the book of Revelation are intermingled with every part. The exhortation to fidelity, patience, obedience, watchfulness and circumspection, receiving Christ and waiting for him, are everywhere interspersed with prophecy.

Oh what a vanity it is to have our minds filled with the images of prophecy, and to be able to explain every varied in-

terpretation of human writers; and yet to have our hearts alienated from God, and estranged from the Saviour, and to be without his Spirit! How awful would it be for a man to be able to discuss prophecy with vast skill, and shew its fulfilment with great talents, (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) and yet, as to real conversion, be far off from God, and perish at the last with infidels and unbelievers! May God preserve the writer and reader from such fatal delusions! It is not without its most valuable instruction, that our Lord represents numbers as thus deceived at the time when he comes again: "*Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" Matt. vii. 22, 23. He also precedes this instruction by shewing the character of those who shall share his kingdom. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" verse 21.

One of the peculiarities of the last days being "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," 2 Tim. iii. 5, how needful it is to **BE WATCHFUL ON THIS POINT!** The present state of the church may be compared to those nuts which have a husk, and a [335] shell, and are hanging on the trees. The visible church is but a small part of the world; and when you look at that church, the larger part of it is only a husk, and when you have taken off the husk, and come to the professors of religion, there is still an outside shell, covering the interior part: all those exterior parts, the tree, the husk, and the shell, are indeed needful for the growth and protection of the interior kernel, which otherwise would be devoured by the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and also for its becoming mature and fit for the Master's use; but by-and-bye the exterior things will be laid aside, and only the interior be regarded and preserved. Do not be deceived by the profession you make, by your contiguity to and connection with the reality; by your usefulness and necessity to its preservation: the separating and dividing time is coming. "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." Mal. iii. 2.

How important is **HEAVENLY WISDOM** in this study! The scriptures particularly mention this. Hosea, in the close of his prophecies, says, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them?" Hosea xiv. 9. Daniel, in the close of his prophecies, asserts, "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Dan.

xii. 10. David closes one of his Psalms with a similar declaration, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Ps. cvii. 43. May we pray much, then, for heavenly wisdom, to guard us from error, and lead us into the truth. This history of the church has shewn, that we are peculiarly exposed to the temptation of precipitate [336] interpretation of the varied symbols and figures of God's word, which as Bacon observes, have a twofold use, "folding up and keeping of things under a veil, and enlightening and laying open of obscurities." God thus *conceals* his purposes from the wicked, and *illustrates* them to the wise. Hosea' xiv. 9.

How valuable also is PATIENT STUDY! There must be a labour of mind, to get a clear understanding of prophecy. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." Psalm i. 2. The Prophets speak, in a forcible figure, of eating God's word; "thy words were found, and I did eat them." Jer. xv. 16. The direction, with the roll of the book, to Ezekiel was, "open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee." Ezekiel ii. 8. "Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then I did eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." Ezekiel iii. 3. So St. John is told "to take the book and eat it up." Rev. x. 9. The prayer of our Liturgy, 'Grant that we may read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,' adopts the same idea. It implies the continued and thoughtful meditation on the word of prophecy, till it fill and embue our whole minds, assimilating them to itself, as food digested is assimilated to the flesh. Prophecies which seem very obscure at first, will often clear up in patient meditation, just as when you come out of the full light of day into a dark room, you can at first distinguish nothing, but if you wait a little, till your sight is inured to the gloom, you will begin to discern things that were quite invisible before.

The view of the subject taken in this work, will, we trust, serve to CAUTION us against speculative [337] anticipations of future events, as if we could unfold the purposes of Jehovah. Let us guard against what St. Peter mentions, (2 Peter i. 20,) any *private interpretation* of prophecy, apart from the analogy of scripture, which is one harmonious whole, and in its varied parts the work of one Divine mind, the Holy Spirit of our God. Prophecy will, therefore, ever be the best commentary on prophecy, till the event make it plain. As Bishop Horsley explains it, no prophecy of scripture is of self-interpretation; the sense is to be sought in the events of the world and in the harmony of the prophetic writings at large, rather than in the bare terms of any single prediction. Scripture prophecy takes large

and comprehensive surveys of events. Let us watch against any views not according to the mind of the Spirit. 1 Cor. ii. 10—15.

It may serve also as a guard against censuring views of prophecy which may not accord with our respective partialities. One, strongly and justly impressed with the magnitude of the conversion of the Jews in its consequences on the world at large, may be disposed to find fault with an application of the promises of the Old Testament to the Christian church; but preceding observations will have shewn that such an application is made by the inspired writers, and justly adopted in the judgment of the soundest divines.* Another, under equally strong [338] and just feelings of the immense and innumerable multitudes of the Gentiles, all having immortal souls and perishing yearly, the promises made of their conversion, and the blessings already given to missionary efforts, may be apt to disregard the peculiar situation and privileges of the Jews, and not only to lose sight of those prophecies which concern their

* The remarkable and lengthened delay of God's gracious purposes respecting the Jews, often but yet obscurely intimated in their *seven times* punishment, (Lev. xxvi.) and the *seven times* of the Gentile monarchies, (Dan. iv.) in the seventy weeks, and the determined desolation of Dan. ix. 24—27, and the 2,300 days of the complete cleansing of the sanctuary, (Dan. viii. 14) is calculated greatly to exercise the faith and disappoint the hopes to which the clear promises of God's word lead us respecting that nation. This tendency of the delay is met by the strongest expressions, in the whole scripture, of God's faithfulness to his promises, tenderness, and compassion to the Jews, and the exceeding depth of his purposes in it. Isaiah and Jeremiah especially abound with these statements. Isaiah xl. 27, 28. xlix. 14—16. lxii. 1. Jer. xvi. 14, 15. xxx. 17, 18. Rom. xi. 25—36. Where there is a great and lasting good to be produced, a long previous preparation is required. The humiliation and conviction for sin must be deep and lengthened, where the righteousness is to be so bright, and the salvation as a lamp that burneth. Isaiah lxii. 1. Four hundred years of depression and bondage prepared the way for their first conquest of Canaan, and their being the depositaries of God's truth for the world; between two and three thousand years of dispersion and judgment prepare the way for their permanent possession of the land of Canaan, and their being the living and constant exhibition of a righteous nation to glorify God and bless the whole earth. Isa. lx. 21. xxvi. 2. Besides the elect remnant gathering from the literal Israel, from age to age, there is a vast election gathering also from the Gentile nations, all of whom are one in Christ Jesus. When Israel is restored, and when the saints are gathered together, and the heavenly Jerusalem is completed, and the Saviour returns in the glory of his Father, how triumphant will be the song of the whole Jewish nation, surveying all the time of its widowhood, and finding that in that very time the Lord was gathering the materials of the full and everlasting glory promised to this nation. *Thou shalt say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children and am desolate, a captive and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone, these, where had they been?* Oh how deep are the counsels of Jehovah, and how unsearchable the riches of his love! Oh how full the comfort, after all their affliction, he has in store for the Jews! Ezek. xiv. 22, 23; Isaiah xl. 1, 2. How complete their satisfaction will be in all his wondrous dealings with them! Joel ii. 26; Jer. xxxi. 14—26. See the 2nd Sermon in the author's "Time to favour Zion."

conversion and restoration, but to undervalue that which is of immense moment in the future glory and blessedness of the world at large. But why should [339] the servants of Christ, aiming at the same happy result, and agreeing in every essential point, be disunited on this, or in any way use expressions that may damp any effort made for the salvation of either Jew or Gentile? Let us remember that Jerusalem of old, just before its destruction, was full of parties raging against each other. May our spiritual Jerusalem take the instructive warning!

One says, 'Christ will certainly come before the millennium;' another says, 'He will not come till after it be passed;' a third, 'He will come without any millennium.' The Author has expressed his own views, that our Lord will visibly appear before the millennium; but those who see not this, agree that he will come, and come unexpectedly, and that we should be ready for his coming, and view it as a quickening motive to labours of love; we are all united in the practical issues which we desire, and let us bear and forbear with each other in love, till we *see eye to eye*. To *abound in love toward one another*, should be the effect of looking for the coming "of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thess. iii. 12. "Grudge not one against another, lest ye be condemned: behold the judge standeth at the door." James v. 9. Oh let not our love to others be in any way proportioned to their reception of those prophetic views which we hold; but let it be an enlarged, pure, divine love, like our God's! And, especially, "if we are strong, we ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," (Rom. xv. 1); to seek, indeed, like-mindedness, as the apostle sweetly prays, (Rom. xv. 5, 6); but to *receive one another*, notwithstanding our mutual ignorances and infirmities, "as Christ has received us to the glory of God." Rom. xv. 7.

[340] Some of those who have taken up the subject of prophecy warmly and speculatively, have expressed themselves so confidently, with such sharpness and bitterness against others, with such assumption of superior wisdom, and such despising of those who have differed from them, as not only to pain their fellow-Christians, but to lead to much *doubtful disputation*, and excite great prejudices against the study of their favourite subject. Others have been ready to exclude from Christian communion, all who differed from their particular sentiments, and to admit at once to Christian fellowship, as partakers of divine grace, all who concurred with them. These great errors are carefully to be guarded against by the true Christian. They are very injurious, and corrupt "the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. xi. 3. How important is it ever to

remember—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal: and though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. Let us study the prophecies as Daniel did, with prostration, humiliation, and persevering prayer.

But let not these statements be misunderstood as if **THE TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE** were uncertain or doubtful: they **ARE MOST CERTAIN**. All differences of opinion shew our own darkness, and unbelief, and sinfulness—not the darkness of scripture. As Luther says, "It ought to be a first principle most firmly maintained among Christians, that the Holy Scriptures are a spiritual light far brighter than the sun, especially in those things which pertain to salvation, [341] or are necessary." We must not let our charity so overflow bounds, as to part with truth. 'The wisdom of God is *first pure and then peaceable.*' The exhortations to be *like-minded, of one accord, of one mind*, are connected with the exhortation to have *the same love*, (Phil. ii. 2.) and the only way is to bring everything to the true test—God's word. John xii. 48; Ephes. v. 13.

We may from this subject learn also the true **USE OF PROPHECY**. It is not primarily intended as a rule of duty.* Precepts are the rule of duty. Much less should prophecy ever be so interpreted as to interfere with plain duty. For instance, if any one should suppose from the predicted hardness of the Jews, that it was our duty not to endeavour to promote their conversion; or if any one should suppose, because the conversion of the Jews would be a blessing to the Gentiles, that therefore we should do nothing for the heathen till the Jews were converted, they would be equally wrong; for the precept, which is the rule of duty, is express, *go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel* **TO EVERY CREATURE**. But the use of prophecy is of another kind;—previously to the event, to raise general expectations, and thus quicken us to duty, excite our hopes, and stimulate our labours, and prove our faith, and strengthen us to endure present trials; and, subsequently to the event, to turn to us for a testimony, becoming an evidence of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, which may confirm our own faith as to all that is yet to be accomplished, and suffi-

* Not but that duty may be gathered from prophecy, as the Apostle gathered a command and a duty *to turn to the Gentiles* from the prediction, *I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles*. Acts xiii. 47.

ciently answer all gainsayers, [342] and objectors to their just claim to the title of the word of God.

Therefore let us not be restrained or cooled in the support of such a blessed cause, as promoting the conversion of immortal souls, by any private and questionable views of unfulfilled prophecy; it rests on plain and positive precept: and on those broad, solid, and effective grounds which cannot be shaken, and on which Christians are generally agreed. The ultimate success of the whole work is certain, and the present duties are plain and obvious. He who neglects caring for either Jew or Gentile, neglects a plain duty and a blessed privilege.

Let us seek to carry on every holy work in OUR SAVIOUR'S SPIRIT, and labour to save immortal souls in that union of heart for which he poured the affecting prayer—*that they may all be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* This practical point is of immense moment. Oh that we may all carefully and habitually maintain the spirit of love in all our discussions! The kingdom of the great enemy of God and man has been vigorously assailed, and he is doubtless watching to divide Christians, that he may weaken and impair their efforts. Let us not be *ignorant of his devices.* There is one all-important rule that we should constantly bear in mind—*Whereunto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* This will lead us rather to dwell on those things in which Christians unite, than to press our particular sentiments, if those sentiments are allowedly of inferior moment. We should hail, and help, and rejoice in each other's hopes and labours and [343] success in the salvation of Jew and Greek, even as the apostle presses the prophetic exhortation—*Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.* Rom. xv. 10.

Not that the subject of prophecy should not be fully discussed, or that those who have studied the subject with care and attention should not state their sentiments freely, and firmly, and at length; only let it be with humility and brotherly love, of which we have seen in our days many delightful examples. Far be it from any to repress a full and free investigation of prophecy in a right spirit. In guarding against one evil, we should not fall into another. Such writers as Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Hurd, Lowth, Woodhouse, and others, with Davison, Keith, Faber, Cuninghame, and many other living authors, have done much, notwithstanding some lesser mistakes which here seem inevitable, to elucidate this deep subject. It is greatly to be regretted that in some of those writers, whose powers of mind and genius and research are admirable, we find not that devotion, meekness, and spi

rituality, and those gracious affections, which are peculiarly needful for the discovery of the divine mind. Even those who have allowedly fallen into great mistakes, have yet cleared up some things: and there is no writer of eminence who has not shed some important light on its difficulties. Let, then, the whole range of prophecy be canvassed; let mind, and research, and piety, be cast into it: and thus *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*. Dan. xii. 4. We may justly expect, as we draw nearer the grand events which are before the church, that there will be more light beaming on its future hopes and prospects.

[344] Let the Holy Scriptures therefore be searched diligently respecting this, as well as every other part of their invaluable contents; especially is it to be desired that the original scripture should be more generally studied and understood. Sacred criticism, modestly advanced, with competent knowledge, is far from being injurious to the cause of truth; and we owe much to those learned men who have thus removed difficulties by which the sacred writings had been long needlessly obscured.

Nor must we forbear here earnestly to press the great importance of fervent and persevering prayer for the Spirit of divine wisdom, the anointing which teacheth us all things. We press this, not because we can expect any direct inspiration to discover to us the future purposes of the Almighty, but because fervent prayer will keep far from us all dogmatism, pride, and fancied superior wisdom and knowledge: fervent prayer will produce that humble waiting state of mind which God delights to bless; fervent prayer will obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit to remove our prejudices, and will make us willing to see, embrace, and profess the truth, however contrary to our former sentiments; fervent prayer will keep alive in us a cordial interest for the whole cause of Christ, with a jealous fear of being biased by a favourite part; and with such tempers and dispositions we shall doubtless be preserved from any material error.

The interpretation of prophecy is a subject, therefore, that should not be lightly entered upon, lest, instead of shewing what is really the mind of the Lord, we put our own mind in its place, and either add to, or take from his word. Especially when our [345] sentiments contradict the general opinion of the main body of Christians through successive ages, it becomes still more incumbent on us not to advance and press our particular opinions but with great caution and diffidence.

Another suggestion may be allowed the writer, while asserting the duty of confessing important truth. In our efforts to

advance the kingdom of Christ, and in our devotions, and especially in published forms of prayer, those who hold such views should be careful not dogmatically and offensively to urge any private or disputed views of prophecy, and especially of minor points; lest any who join with us should be stumbled, their zealous efforts or devotional feelings be checked, and that union of desire and labour to which the special blessing is promised should be hindered; and on the other hand those who differ from these views should not be too sensitively alive to slight differences. Romans xiv. 1. It is perhaps a yet more important point to be gained, that Christians should feel that this is ground on which they may all with humility, yet freely, state their views of scripture.

To view the prophecies in their large aspect, as comprehending the general dealings of God with mankind through successive ages, enlarges and raises the mind; but exclusively or mainly to confine our views of it to one particular point has a tendency to narrow the mind, and lead it off from the great intent of prophecy.

Remembering, then, that the advancement of God's kingdom is peculiarly his own work, and that he will unfold his own plan in his own time and way, we should watch for the openings of his providence, not [346] attempting to force our own schemes, but rather leave it to that providence to interpret his own commands. Yet we should enter heartily when *a great and effectual door is opened*, and never was there a greater door opened, and never did the voice of Providence more manifestly call Christians to labour for the benefit of the whole human race, both Jew and Gentile, than in this day. O may we be wise to *discern the signs of the times*, and to obey the plain command of our Saviour. May we be quickened in promoting his cause, by the cheering light of prophecy, which, when accomplished, confirms our faith in the divine records; and while unaccomplished, supports and animates the church in its labours and sufferings, with the bright hope of a future triumph and a final recompense.

This leads me to add some practical remarks on one main improvement of prophecy, PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST. That coming leads on to the great issue of all the events of this lower world, and the scriptures dwell very much on our being prepared for it; may the Divine Spirit assist this effort to lead the reader more believingly, practically, and constantly, to look forward to his coming.

If he will *appear the second time without sin unto salvation to them that look for him*:—if in that day the crown of righteousness will be given by the righteous Judge, *to them that love his*

appearing, (2 Tim. iv. 8,) how important is it for us earnestly to look for and affectionately to desire that event!

If the warning is again and again repeated, "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh," Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13: If we are solemnly charged, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour [347] as ye think not, the Son of man cometh," Matt. xxiv. 44; and our Lord in that part of prophecy which seems immediately to relate to the period in which we are now living, says, "Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame," Rev. xvi. 15, how circumspectly should the Christian now walk, treading as on the borders of eternity, and in the anticipation of all those events which mark the last days.

There are some important scriptural directions that we should ever bear in mind with reference to this great event.

(1.) **WATCHFULNESS** is the primary duty to which the scriptures continually direct us. Some passages have already been noticed which point out this duty.

Our Lord makes it a direction applicable to *all* his people when he says, "What I say unto you I say unto all, watch." Mark xiii. 37. Watchfulness has a special reference to the dangers with which we are surrounded; and those dangers which are now on every side of this subject peculiarly call us to this circumspect spirit. The infidelity of the present times is peculiarly marked, open, and contagious. Watch, then, against temptations to unbelief; every jot and tittle of God's word in its plain meaning is altogether true, though the Neologian, learned in languages even under the mask of Christianity, and the Infidel Socialist, more openly may attempt to explain it away; and though the profligate openly revile and scoff at it.

The novelties of lively imaginations are also to be guarded against. Be not carried away by the zeal and devotedness and talents of any man, from those old truths on which the church has fed from the beginning—"ask for the old paths, where is the good way, [348] and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jer. vi. 16. Satan is now specially busy. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. v. 8. This watchfulness expects sudden attacks, is not ignorant of Satan's devices, and anticipates the activity of the enemy, being always ready for him.

(2.) **OCCUPATION** in our master's service is a scriptural direction on this point—*Occupy till I come*. Luke xix. 13. We have many talents committed to our charge, and we are to be

diligently laying them out for our Master—whether they be property, time, ability, influence, health, strength, or any other, all is to be heartily and diligently laid out for God. Matt. xxiv. 14—30. The Christian has not a moment to lose, adding one grace to another, he is charged, “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter i. 5—11. Seeking to save the souls of others is another most important part of our work as Christians. After St. Jude had given that lively description in Enoch’s prophecy of our Lord’s coming, and charged believers to *build up themselves in their most holy faith*, (Jude 20,) he tells them with regard to others, “Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Jude 22, 23. And doing “good to all men, and especially to the household of faith,” (Gal. vi. 10,) is so remarkably urged upon us by the account of the last judgment, that I need only refer the Christian to that animating spring of occupation in our Master’s service recorded Matt. xxv. 31—46.

[349] (3.) SOBRIETY OF MIND is another duty connected with the coming of Christ. The apostle says, “Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night:—let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love: and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” 1 Thess. v. 2—8. Our Lord gives similar directions. Luke xxi. 34—36. Sobriety, both of mind and body, is, indeed, to be greatly prized; the *spirit of a sound* mind is joined with the *spirit of power and of love*, and where these go together men are eminently blessed of God. A realizing and scriptural, a holy and practical view of our Lord’s speedy coming, is well calculated to make us, not wild and enthusiastic, either in novelties of doctrine or peculiarity of practice, but eminently sober. “Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand.” Phil. iv. 5. The Christian should not go into one real extravagance, but fully attend to *whatsoever things are lovely and whatsoever things are of good report*. His principles of faith, and his corresponding practice, his confession of Christ, and his adherence to his truth, will expose him quite enough to the reproach of the world, without courting them by needless display or peculiarity. You will, in walking in the old paths, from the various difficulties of your course, still have to attend to that direction, “gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter i. 13.

(4.) READINESS is another scriptural direction often repeat-

ed. "Be ye therefore also ready, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Luke xii. 40. We assuredly believe our Lord *will* come, and we must stand before him in judgment, and hear [350] his sentence, Depart, ye cursed, or Come, ye blessed,—and our state through eternity depends on that sentence; and this may be very soon! What words, then, can adequately tell the vast importance of being duly prepared for this event, so infinitely momentous to us! O the madness of thinking any worldly concerns whatever, a reason for neglecting these eternal concerns! True readiness has been well considered as a readiness of state and of habit. A readiness of state consisting in the pardon of all sin through the blood of Jesus; the gift of a perfect righteousness in Christ, (2 Cor. v. 21; Isaiah lxi. 10,) and an inward meetness by the power of the Spirit on the heart, (Col. i. 12.) All of which are the free gift of God, to those who come to him in the name of his Son, (Isaiah lv. 7; Rom. iii. 21, 22; and Luke xi. 13.) And a readiness of habit, or actual readiness, such as Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Our Saviour teaches us this duty very plainly. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately." Luke xii. 35, 36. To attain this actual readiness we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, (Titus ii. 11—13,) and mortify our sins, (Col. iii. 4, 5,) we should abide in Christ, (1 John ii. 28,) and purify ourselves as he is pure, (1 John iii. 2, 3.) Our conversation should be in heaven, (Phil. iii. 20, 21,) and our affection set on things above, (Col. iii. 2—4,) and we should be patient in tribulation, (Heb. x. 36, 37.) *Be ye also ready*, is a comprehensive direction which leads us to the whole course of Christian duty.

[351] (5.) INTERCESSION for others is a duty immediately connected with the study of prophecy. Daniel's example is here peculiarly instructive—"I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the *Lord* came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord *God*, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes," (Dan. ix. 2, 3;) and then follows that beautiful intercession given us in his ninth chapter. Oh! if prophetic studies did but lead us as they led Daniel, to much intercession for our country and our fellow-creatures, we might indeed hope for the most happy issue in an enlarged knowledge of God's will, and an enlarged blessedness to his church.

(6.) PATIENT WAITING FOR CHRIST,—is another important

scriptural direction.* The Apostle prays [352] for his Thessalonian converts—"the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." 2 Thess. iii. 5. This supposes it to be to us a most desirable event, as indeed to every Christian it is. It is surely a transporting hope to be rescued out of all past evils of this sinful world, to be at once changed, to put on incorruption and immortality, and after the dead in Christ are raised, to be transfigured and "caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air, and so ever to be with him." 1 Thess. iv. 17. What tongue can tell, what imagination conceive, the rapturous joy of the emancipated Christian, in an instant freed from the body of sin, clothed with a spiritual body, and for ever like his Lord, and for ever seeing him as he is. Let us realize this hope, and we shall see the need of divine grace for the patient waiting for Christ. This is equally opposed to indifference, unconcern, and neglect, on the one hand; and to despondency, fainting, and weariness on the other. The Christian should both desire and expect the coming of his Saviour. His faith, hope, and love should all be in exercise on this great truth. He desires, but he waits;—he expects, but he is patient; and in due time *he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Heb. x. 37. The early Christians had to look through the long vista of at least eighteen centuries; but the bright and glowing object at the termination of this vista, kept their eye of faith steadily fixed in patient waiting for it. Enoch viewed its approach at least 5000 years beforehand, (Jude 14, 15.) Let not us, as we approach nearer and nearer, be more indifferent in "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," Titus ii. 13; but in its nearer [353] approach, while

* The meaning of waiting for the coming of Christ may indeed be mistaken. It does imply a conviction of nearness to the time; it does not imply a conviction of an instant, or immediate coming. Against an instant expectation the Thessalonian Christians were warned, (2 Thess. ii. 2,) of a nearness we are assured as a motive to patience. James v. 8. The day of the Lord appears to commence with the great tribulation, when the Jews are delivered: that may be close at hand, and a short period in itself, before the rapture of the saints, and the descent of Christ to our earth. To be prepared for the day of the Lord is our immediate duty, that we *may be accounted worthy to escape all those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.* A definite fixing of a date would be an obstacle to fulfilling our general duties. God's exact foreknowledge of times and seasons is an ocean far beyond what we are able to contain or manage. Had we exact foreknowledge, it would become to us, in our present state, mere fatalism, and be productive of many evils. We should make it destructive to ourselves and to others. We have to be thankful for what he has hidden, as well as for what he has revealed. The remarkable mixture of trial with nearness of joy, set before us in the character of the day of the Lord, is eminently calculated to promote watchfulness and preparedness with joyful hope.

we desire it more ardently, may we also patiently wait for its full revelation and glory.

(7.) **CHRISTIANS COMFORTING EACH OTHER**, is another duty connected with the coming of Christ. Christians are now "companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Rev. i. 9. They have to *suffer for well-doing*, they have to bear the scorn of the world, and the mistakes and misrepresentations even of brethren; but let us attend to the divine direction, and let the coming of Christ be viewed not as a matter of controversy but of comfort—"Wherefore comfort one another with these words"—1 Thess. iv. 19.—"He died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him; wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do," (v. 10, 11.) Oh! if laying aside things in which we differ, we were oftener regarding this glorious hope, and speaking of it with glowing expectation, surely our hearts would be more knit together in love, and we should rise to a higher point of devotedness to God our Saviour. What consolatory hopes on the death of our brethren, (1 Thess. iv. 13,) what exceeding joy in the presence of the Lord, (Jude 24,) what a gathering together of the general assembly of the first-born (2 Thess. ii. 1; Heb. xii. 23) does the coming of the Lord set before us! The body may indeed be committed to the grave, and there mingle with the dust; but that body contains the hidden seeds of a future glorious, undecaying, immortal body, which, at the last trumpet, shall rise in glory unutterable and incorruptible, and with a spirit altogether pure and perfect, and for ever dwell with fellow-partakers of the same glory, and in the bliss of the one Lord and Redeemer. Surely here is [354] the Christian's most effectual topic of consolation amid all his trials and sorrows. "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter iv. 12, 13. Exceedingly inconsistent with the hope of this coming is all bitterness, wrath, malice, and hard censures of our brethren, (Rom. xiv. 9, 10; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Matt. vii. 1—5; xxiv. 48, 49,) it should rather inspire feelings of sympathy, tenderness, love and compassion towards all men.

Let us **JOIN THE MEDITATION OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST GLORIFIED**. The apostle tells the Corinthians—"I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" he determined not to keep back the deepest part of his humiliation, while, as his Epistle shews, (ch. xv.) he dwelt at large on the glories of his return and the resurrection of his saints. *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,*

has a primary reference to his death, but it has a larger aspect, including the consequences of that death and the glorious exaltation which followed it—WHEREFORE *God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* There is such glory in the doctrine of the cross, it is such a display of all the divine perfections, and their full harmony, in the recovery of sinful men, that it will ever be the great boast and joy of the believer, and the grand ordinance for the salvation of lost sinners: but the glory to come is the triumphant [355] issue of that cross, displaying also most abundantly the enlarged wisdom, faithfulness, and loving-kindness of our God. We should not separate one from the other in our meditations. Our Redeemer himself thought much of the glory to follow, (John xvii.) and so was sustained in enduring the cross, (Heb. xii. 2.) it may hence be seen how much his followers need the same sustaining hopes in their sufferings and conflicts. The confession of the name or glory of Jesus, may be now an important evidence of fidelity, as well as the confession of his death. Pergamos's fidelity was proved in not denying *the faith*, (Rev. ii. 13;) Philadelphia's fidelity is proved in not denying *the name of Christ*. Rev. iii. 8. To keep back his death, in the testimony given to him, was an earlier temptation of the church; to keep back his glory may be a special temptation in the testimony which we have now to give. It is peculiarly opposed to the infidel character of our age. Nor is any thing that God has revealed on this glory to be viewed as immaterial; there will be found to be a real value in everything revealed as a part of our future reward. The 1000 years' reign of the risen saints, previous to their final and everlasting glory, and the blessedness of the new earth as well as the new heavens, may well have an animating and holy influence on the Christian, without their puffing him up with pride, or being substituted for his everlasting heavenly felicity; when we remember that suffering is the way to this glory, and holiness the all-essential meetness for it.

(9.) I would add another scriptural direction applicable to all, but especially to my brethren in the ministry, TO LABOUR FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS [356] WITH AN ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE JOY, which it will give us in the day of Christ. "Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Phil. ii. 16. O what a joy is before holy Paul in the almost boundless results of his labours!

APPENDIX.

I.

SUGGESTED SCHEME AND AXIOMS FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

[359] The Author, after considering the vast variety of interpretations which have been given of this difficult but truly precious book, most acquiesces in the view taken by a valued friend, to whom he has before referred, and which he gives in this Appendix.

It may at least serve, with the preceding remarks, as a standard of the comparative approach of differing systems to each other. With some modifications, the *scheme*, or general arrangement, most harmonizes with Mr. Frere's views, and the more special *applications* with Mr. Cuninghame's. The leading earlier Protestant interpretations are those of Brightman, Mede, Vitringa and Bengelius; and the leading later Interpreters, who have more or less followed these, are Woodhouse, Faber, Cuninghame, and Frere. After considering their respective systems, the Author is satisfied that there is more harmony and unanimous establishment of truth, than many suppose. He relinquishes as wholly untenable, all older or modern attempts, that would consider the Apocalypse as accomplished in the first stages of Christianity, or as yet wholly unfulfilled; or which proceed on an entirely new system of interpretation, wholly at variance with that which has been generally adopted by the large body of Protestant interpreters who have more or less followed the leaders just mentioned. After reading those new systems, the Author is only the more satisfied that there is sufficient ground to acquiesce in the general Protestant interpretation.

It may assist us first to compare the plans of former interpreters, and shew their harmony in great points, especially THE SYSTEMS OF FABER, CUNINGHAME, AND FRERE.

[360] The views of Apocalyptic arrangement and interpretation, based on regular principles, which have latterly been most widely received in the British church, are those of these three authors. The first of them excels rather in its discursive learning; the second in the justice of its individual interpretations; the third in symmetry of arrangement. They are alike based on the system and synchronisms of Mede: but the two last, by their applications of the seals, approach nearly to the arrangement of Vitringa; and Mr. Frere has sought to establish it by indications drawn from the parallel texts of the prophecy. The present currency of these three systems, the latest modification of the scheme of Mede, and with all the advantage of fuller historic light, will form the natural preparation for the full analysis of the prophecy.

First, These three systems agree alike with Mede and Bengelius, in the following principles: The commencement of the prophecy in the time of St. John; its continuance to the end of all things, without intervening break or chasm; the future and literal millennium; the application of the four first trumpets to judgments in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries; the prediction of the Saracens in one of the two former woes; the future restoration of Israel; the application of the woman to the true Christian church; the express description of the Papacy, in chap. xiii.; the mystical reckoning of the times, chap. xii. xiii.; the shock and rapid succession of the vials; the application of Babylon to the Roman church; its future destruction by the ten kings; the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the holy city, and the temple of God. All these are important truths, and it is a striking evidence of the promised blessing, chap. i. 3, that, on these, all the received systems, even that most defective in arrangement, are in entire accordance.

Secondly, These systems agree with Mede, where he differs from Bengelius, in the following points: The agreement in time, of the seventh trumpet with the vials; the application of the first woe to the Saracens; the application of the second woe to the Turks; the application of the first beast to the secular Latin empire; the application of the second beast to the ecclesiastical Latin empire, or Papacy; the common mystical reckoning of the forty-two months and 1260 days, chap. xi. xii. xiii.; the place of chap. x. and xi. before the seventh trumpet; the rate of mystical reckoning, a year for a prophetic day; the mystical meaning of the [361] holy city, chap. xi. 2; the first death and resurrection of the witnesses; the priority of the earthquake, (xi. 13) to the seventh trumpet; and the earthquake (xvi. 16,) the extinction of the Turkish power, in the sixth vial; the retrospective mention of the

heads, chap. xvii.; the application of the sixth head to the imperial rule in the prophet's time; the single millennium, followed by the loosing of Satan, and the judgment of the rest of the dead at its close. These are also important and leading truths, and, combined with the former, already lead us far towards a true and full understanding of the prophecy. Thirdly, These writers agree in the following corrections of Mede's system. They place all the vials under the seventh trumpet. They reject the chronological meaning of the inner court, as denoting the early times of the church. They distinguish between the image of the beast and the beast himself, and restore the uniform sense of the latter. They assign the first effusion of the vials to the French Revolution; and date the time, times, and a half, either with the decree of Justinian, so as to terminate with the commencement of the vials, or with the time of Phocas, so as to terminate with their close. Lastly, They make the commencement of this mystical period parallel with the first woe, instead of the first trumpet. Fourthly, To these elements of truth, already numerous, the interpretations of Mr. Cuninghame and Mr. Frere, add the following, in which they diverge from Mede and Faber as well as Bengelius. They assign to the series of the seals, the trumpets, and the vision of the woman, a parallel commencement. They extend the seals throughout the dispensation of the gospel. They place the sixth seal parallel with the opening times of the seventh trumpet. They close the time, times, and a half, at the beginning of the vials. They refer the harvest to an ingathering of mercy, as the vintage to a season of wrath. They view the vision of the Son of man, chap. xiv. and of the word of God, chap. xix. as two successive stages of the second personal advent in glory.

It may thus be seen that the variety of interpreters, and their views, is far removed from total uncertainty; and that increasing light has been constantly given. Of forty principles which exhibit the latest advance in prophetic truth, thirteen of the most vital are shared by Bengelius, whose scheme is the most defective, twenty-eight were already held by Mede; half of the remaining [362] twelve are received by the earliest, and the rest by the two later of the three living interpretators who have been most distinguished in this field of inquiry.

The chief remaining elements that need to be combined, for a more complete and full exposition, are the following: The application of the four first seals with Dean Woodhouse and Mr. Cuninghame; the interpretation of the symbolic opening with Mr. Habershon; the meaning of the fourth part with Mr. Faber; the right place of the seventh seal with Mr. Frere;

the true date of the first trumpet with Vitringa; the proper meaning of the second with Daubuz; of the third with Mr. Frere, and of the fourth partly as the same author; the true meaning of the fallen star with Vitringa; the meaning of the third part, the continuity of the sixth trumpet with Bishop Newton; the distinct reference of the temple, the altar, and the worshippers; the time of the death and resurrection with Mr. Fleming and Mr. Elliott; the earthquake with Mr. Frere; the unbroken continuity of chap. xii. with Brightman; the succession of the first and the second beast; the connection of the eagle and the angel messages; the note of time in the number of the beast with Bengelius; the name of the beast in the number with Clarke; the time and succession of the sealing of the tribes, with their historic meaning; the distinctive character of the three main visions; the connection of the times with the 1335 days of Daniel; the transition from the mystery of God and mystical events to the literal Antichrist and personal advent; the full interpretation of the number of the beast on a simple and strict principle, and in all the variety of its significance.

Some have entertained the opinion that there may be a literal recapitulation of the prophecy respecting the Man of Sin and the whole book of Revelation. That Antichrist will at last assume an open and infidel form, seems plain from many scriptures. And it is probable too that part of the book of Revelation may link itself with the Old Testament prophecies, and be finally realized in events more literal, at the recall of the Jews. But there seem to the Author insuperable objections in the structure of the Apocalypse, and the nature of many of its symbols, to such a re-application of the whole. The principles by which such parts might be distinguished would require a research beyond the purpose of the present work.

THE SCHEME OF THE APOCALYPSE.

[363] The siege of Jericho by Joshua contains a concentrated or bird's-eye view, or type, of the history developed in the Revelation. The sealing of the 144,000 is supposed to take place during the whole progress of the dispensation, and the character of successive periods of the church to be typified by the tribes successively named.

VISION OF THE CHURCHES, CHAPTERS I. II. III.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION, CHAPTER IV.

| [1] THE SEALS. THE KINGDOM OF PROVIDENCE. CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD. | [2] THE TRUMPETS. THE KINGDOM OF THE WORD; CHRIST, THE ANGEL OF THE COVE- NANT. | [3] THE CHURCH. KINGDOM OF THE SPIRIT. CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN. |
|--|---|--|
| Introduction, ch. v. 4 to 14. | Introduction viii. 2 to 6. | The Travail of Church, xii. 1 to 4. |
| Sealed Book, the Se- cret Councils of the World's Re- demption. | <i>Christ the Priest.</i> Fire cast on the earth, Luke xii. 49. Warning Earth- quake. | Birth of the seed of the woman, v. 5. Flight to wilder- ness begun, v. 6. War in heaven, v. 7, 8. |
| Seal I. vi. 1, 2, 70. The sealing Victories of the in Ezek. Church Militant. ix. x. 1 to 7. Angel of 7th Trumpet. JUDAH, REUBEN. | Trumpet I. viii. 7. Two wit- Gothic invasions, nesses, their 250. character and office. Trumpet II. viii. 8, Ch. xi. 4 to 9. 10. Fall of Rome, 365. | Satan cast down, v. 9 to 12. Luke x. 18. Paganism over- thrown, 323. Eagle's wings giv- en to the woman, v. 14, 395. |
| Seal II. vi. 3, 324. GAD, Discord of the ASHER. Church. Sword sent, Mat. x. 34. | Trumpet III. viii. 10, 11, 412. Heresies of the East. | Protection of the two empires. Flood from mouth of Dragon, v. 15, 16. |
| Seal III. vi. 5, 6. NAPHTALI, Spiritual Famine of MANASSEH. the Church, 533. | Trumpet IV. viii. 12. 565. Commence- Eclipse of Eastern ment of Empire. their pro- Woe Trumpets 1260 phesying. days. | Deluge of Arian nations. Commencement of 1260 days. Rise of Beast from the sea, xiii. 1 to 10, 476. |
| Seal IV. vi. 7, 8. SIMEON, Spiritual Desolation LEVI. of the Church, 1073. [For four first seals, see Zech. vi. 1 to 5.] | Trumpet V. ix. 1 to 12. 608. Saracen Woe. | Civil Apostacy of the West. |
| Seal V. vi. 9 to 11. ISSACHAR, Cry of the Martyrs, ZEBULUN. 1438. | Trumpet VI. ix. 13 to 21, 1063. Turkish Woe. Remnant repent not. Revived pro- phesying. | Rise of Beast from the earth, xiii. 11 to 18, 774. Ecclesiastical Em- pire of the West. Sealed ones with the Lamb, xiv. 1 to 5. |
| Seal VI. vi. 12 to 17. JOSEPH. 1789. Signs of Wrath. | <i>Christ the Prophet, x.</i> 1 to 4. Delay no longer. Resurrec- Prophet rises. tion and Temple measured. Ascen- Earthquake warn- sion, v. ing. 11. 12. Remnant affrighted. Close of second woe. | First Angel mes- sage, v. 6, 7. Second Angel message, v. 8. Third Angel mes- sage, v. 9 to 11. Fourth and Fifth Angels, 14 to 16. The harvest of mercy. |
| Seal VII. viii. 1. BENJAMIN. Pause before Judg- ment, 1815. The Day of Wrath, vii. 1-3. Feast of Tabernacles vii. 9. Ingathering of the Church, v. 14-17. | Trumpet vii. xi. 15 to 19. <i>Christ the King.</i> The Temple opened. | Sixth and Seventh Angels, 17 to 20. Vintage of Wrath. |

[4.] THE VIALS.

INTRODUCTION, chap. xv.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| The Day of Wrath, ver. i. 7. | The temple opened, ver. 5, 6. | The Harvest and Vintage, xvi 15, 19. |
| VIAL I. xvi. 1, 2. | A grievous sore. | Eruption of Infidelity, 1792. |
| VIAL II. ver. 3. | Sea turned to blood. | Anarchy, bloodshed, and massacre in France, 1793. |
| VIAL III. ver. 4, 7. | Rivers turned to blood. | Education becomes murderous, 1795. |
| VIAL IV. ver. 8, 9. | Scorching Heat. | Imperial Despotism of Napoleon, 1802. |
| VIAL V. ver. 10, 11. | Kingdom of Beast. | Retributive justice on France, 1815. |
| VIAL VI. ver. 12, 16. | Euphrates dried. | Ruin of Turkish Empire, 1822. |
| VIAL VII. ver. 12 to 17. | Fall of Babylon. | Battle of Armageddon, and coming of the Lord. |

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|---|--|--|
| [5.] <i>Vision of First Reveal- ing Angel.</i> xvii. 1. to xix. 10. THE FALL OF BABYLON. 3D WOE. | [6.] <i>Vision of Christ the Word.</i> xix. 11. to xxi. 8. THE APPEARING AND KINGDOM OF CHRIST. | [7.] <i>Vision of Last Revealing Angel.</i> xxi. 9. to xxii. 15. THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM. |
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GENERAL CLOSE, XXII. 16 to 21.

[364] SUGGESTED GENERAL AXIOMS OF THE INTERPRETATION
OF THE APOCALYPSE.

I.—GENERAL SCOPE.

- 1 The Apocalypse is a prophecy of things future in the time of the apostle.

2 It is a prophecy reaching to the end of all things, and the eternal kingdom of Christ.

3 The opening vision in the address to the Seven Churches relates to things which were then present. Ch. i. 19.

4 The Angelic Vision, chap. iv. 1—xxii., relates to things which were next to follow.

5 The prophecy is continuous between these two limits.

6 The four Beasts, Dan. vii., denote the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Latin or Roman Empires.

7 The coming of the Son of Man, Dan. vii., is the second advent of Christ.

8 The kingdom of the Son of Man, Dan. vii., is a future visible earthly and glorious kingdom of Christ.
- 9 The Judgment, Rev. xix., is the same with that in Dan. vii.

10 The vision, Rev. xix., describes the second coming of Christ.

11 The Millennium, in chap. xx., follows the second advent, and begins the visible kingdom of Christ on earth.

12 The Apocalypse, chap. iv—xix. is contained within the times of the fourth or Roman Empire.

13 The passage xvii. 7—18, is one of direct interpretation, and its notes of time to be referred to the very time of the prophecy.

14 Babylon in the Apocalypse denotes Rome, or some power having its seat and centre at Rome.

15 The vision of chap. iv. v. dates from the Ascension of our Lord.

16 The first seal dates from the fall of Jerusalem or nearly.

17 The last vial coincides in time with the fall of Rome in its latest stage.

18 The visions, chap. iv—xvi., are included within the Ascension and the fall of Rome except in their very close.

II.—STRUCTURE.

- 19 The Apocalypse is composed, chap. i. 19, of the things seen, chap. i., the things then present, chap. ii. iii., and the things to be hereafter. chap. iv—xxii.
- 20 The last of these alone are direct prophecy, and were signified to the apostle in visions by an angel, ch. i. 1; iv. 1; xxii. 8, 9.
- 21 The angelic visions are seven. The seals, ch. v—vii. The trumpets, viii—ix. The woman and her seed, xii—xiv. The vials, xv. xvi. The fall of Babylon, xvii. 1; xix. 9. The judgment, xix. 10; xxi. 8. The heavenly Jerusalem, xxi. 9; xxii. 7.
- 22 The prophecy is successive from ch. xviii. to the close.
- 23 The ordinals in each sevenfold series are strictly successive in time.
- 24 The vision, ch. xii—xiv. has its three parts continuous and successive.
- 25 The events of ch. vii. are those of the seventh seal.
- 26 The passage xi. 4—10, is a narrative parenthesis, and no part of the *vision*.
- 27 The vision, x. xi. 15, falls entirely within the sixth trumpet.
- 28 The three first visions close with the time of the last vial or after.
- 29 They date from the opening of the prophecy, and are parallel.
- 30 The vials commence with the time of the seventh trumpet.
- 31 The sealing is successive, and reaches through the trumpets to the last.
- 32 The siege of Jericho is a divine type, and a full key to the structure.

III.—PARTICULAR APPLICATION.

- 33 The third woe is the open judgment of God's enemies, Babylon, the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Dragon, ch. xviii—xx.
- 34 The two first woes are the Saracens and the Turks.
- 35 The False Prophet is the same with the two-horned beast.
- 36 The beast throughout is in the 8th or revived form.
- 37 The 4th beast, in Dan. vii., the body of the dragon, ch. xii., and

the revived beast, chap. xiii. xvii. xi., are the rising Latin empire, the united Roman empire, and the revived Latin empire of the west.

- 38 The False Prophet is the same with the little horn, in Dan. vii.
- 39 The False Prophet denotes the Ecclesiastical Latin empire, or Papacy.
- 40 The Harlot or Babylon in the stage, ch. xvii., is the same with the image of the beast.
- 41 Babylon denotes the Romish church.
- 42 The Woman denotes the Apostolic church.
- 43 The sealed tribes denote Apostolic Christians through the times of the New Testament.
- 44 The palm-bearing multitude denotes the church in final triumph.

IV.—CHRONOLOGY.

- 45 The number of the beast is a mark of time besides its other characters, and forms a transition from the mystical to the literal reckoning.
- 46 The time, times, and half a time, the 42 months, and 1260 days are the same interval.
- 47 The time, times, and half of Daniel, and the Revelation are the same period.
- 48 A prophetic day is a natural year.
- 49 The three-and-a-half times are the half of seven times, the whole season of Gentile power, and the same with the latter times of St. Paul.
- 50 A time denotes 360 years, and *χρονος* is equivalent to *καιρος*.

V.—DETAIL OF APPLICATION.

The following result simply from the combination of the above.

- 51 The 4 first trumpets contain the judgments that fell on the Roman empire from the 1st century to the rise of the Saracens.
- 52 The third part denotes uniformly the third or eastern empire, the fourth part, the fourth or western empire.
- 53 The first trumpet relates to the Gothic eruptions before Constantine.
- 54 The second trumpet relates to the fall of the Latin emperorship of Rome.

- 55 The third trumpet relates to the religious feuds of the east.
- 56 The fourth trumpet describes the decline and long eclipse of the eastern empire after Justinian.
- 57 The opening of ch. x. relates to the revival of learning and light from the fall of the eastern empire to the reformation.
- 58 The re-prophecy, and the resurrection of the witnesses both refer to the reformation.
- 59 The ascension of the witnesses relates to the era of missions.
- 60 The attendant earthquake is the first shock of the French Revolution.
- 61 The four first Seals relate to four steps of imperial change, and four states of the visible church; Apostolic, Nicene Orthodox, Superstitious, and Papal, the last in the climax of corruption.
- 62 The fifth seal relates to the height of Papal power before the reformation, and a time *χρονος* intervenes before the sixth, while from the time of the oath, ch. x. 7, a time does not intervene.
- 63 The sixth seal describes the French revolution.
- 64 The holding of the winds, ch. vii. 1, is the same with the silence of half a season, and answers to the time since the general peace.
- 65 The harvest and vintage are future and near at hand.
- 66 The vials relate to the French revolution.
- 67 The sixth vial is now accomplishing in Turkey and Christendom.
- 68 The seventh vial is near at hand.
- 69 The mystery of God will be accomplished within a time, or 360 years from the time of the reformation.
- 70 The seven epistles typically describe seven successive estates of the spiritual church from the first to the second advent.

VI.—PARTICULAR TIMES.

- 71 The time, times, and half, and 1260 days of Revelation are the same period.
- 72 The 42 months have a date rather later, like the two dates of the 70 years captivity.
- 73 The 1290 and 1335 days of Dan. both commence with the 1260 days of Revelation, or time, times, and a half, of both prophecies.
- 74 The 7 times of the Gentiles begin with the subjection of Israel under Shalmanezar.
- 75 The three and a half times begin with Justinian's eternal code, A. D. 532—3.
- 76 The 42 months close nearly with the 1335 days.
- 77 The 42 months begin A. D. 604 or A. D. 607—8, with the reunion of the ten kingdoms or the public establishment of idolatry.
- 78 The 1335 days end in A. D. 1867—8.

II.

SCRIPTURE CHRONOLOGY.

[367] The six days of creation, have, from early ages, been supposed to be typical of the history of the world for 6000 years. The Jews, the Christian Fathers, and later writers might be enumerated at considerable length, who have concurred in this view, and some scriptural evidence bearing this tendency might be adduced. But without dwelling upon this view, or urging its importance, the following table (which was prepared at the author's request by the friend mentioned in the preface) may be very useful in helping the memory to retain dates of great events, from its coming under that simple arrangement of six evenings and six mornings with corresponding remarkable

æras in the history of the world. It will tend also to furnish a key to prophecy by connecting the events with the prediction, and a key to history, by shewing the scriptural character of those events.

Most affecting is the fact that nearly six thousand years of God's revealed mercy have passed by, and eighteen centuries of its last and highest form, in the gospel of Christ; and two-thirds of mankind, perhaps three-fourths, are still almost strangers to its very sound. Even in those countries where it is outwardly received, that gospel once so mighty, seems as though it had lost its glory and power; and on every side the truth is forgotten that men are prisoners under a sentence of death, and a proclamation of mercy has been brought by God's own eternal Son to a perishing world.

In the midst of this darkness, the light of prophecy cheers our paths, and its chronological statements are especially designed for our meditation and our comfort, and they lead us to the conviction that a far happier state of things is rapidly approaching.

The works of creation are doubtless designed, as we see manifested through the scriptures, to be visible and sensible pictures of the deeper and more important works of grace, that by the outward senses we may be led to the full knowledge of spiritual objects. The lights in the firmament were fixed there to be *for* [368] *signs and for seasons, as well as for days and for years.* But at present our insight into these things is very feeble, limited, and indistinct, and we may mistake even the appearances of things, and count that which is still darkness to be as the dawn. How different a light will the day of tribulation bring into our fallen world! open and actual judgments inflicted by the immediate hand of God upon his enemies, and his manifested deliverance of his people, and their visible glory will fully shew the real character of all things, and the supreme excellence of righteousness and grace. Of that day it is predicted, *Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.* Isa. xxx. 26. What wisdom, forbearance, loving-kindness, righteousness, and holiness, constantly at work in the last 6000 years, but yet hidden from us, will the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God openly display to all intelligent beings!

The chronological table, before our Lord's coming, is founded on the Hebrew as settled by Usher, while considerable use has been made of that truly valuable work, Clinton's *Fasti Hellenici*. The author, though he has considered what has

been stated by Mr. Hales and Mr. Cuninghame, sees not adequate evidence to convince his mind that the Hebrew dates are corrupted, and believes that the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were committed, have really been faithful to that important trust. The variations in their present chronology from ours, arise not from differences connected with the sacred text, but from differences of reckoning the periods subsequent to the close of the Historical Books of the Old Testament. The eventful character of the present time as hastening to the close of the sixth Millennium of the world, and the promised sabbatism, (Heb. iv. 9.) on the principles of the Hebrew chronology as here given, will be very obvious.

According to the order of the first chapter of Genesis, the evening comes first, and then the morning: (b.) points out the birth, and (d.) the death of those named; (æt.) the age; (pr.) prophecies; and (jub.) jubilee. References are also occasionally given to that remarkable illustrator of prophecy, the historian Gibbon, who, though he meant not so, has furnished the most striking developement of the book of Revelation.

The years of the world are given down to the Christian era, the years of that era afterward. To reduce the year A.M. to B.C., we must subtract them from 4006. To reduce years A.D. to A.M. we must add 4005. The varieties of chronology, if we adopt Mr. Clinton's number for the interval of the Judges, affect the dates after the dedication, only by a constant addition, which in his chronology is 133 years.

A few eras which are cycles from the creation are noticed; and where doubt was particularly felt, a query is put at the end of the word or sentence.*

* As Mr. Clinton's work is less likely to fall into the hands of common readers, and his extent of research and accuracy of statement are very peculiar, and his dates bring us now (in 1836) to within twenty-six years of the termination of the 6000th year of the world, some of the principal are here subjoined.

| B. C. | A. M. | EVENTS. | YEARS. |
|-------|-------|---|-------------|
| 4138 | | Adam - - - - - | |
| 2482 | 1656 | The Deluge - - - - - | 1656 |
| 2130 | 2008 | Birth of Abraham - - - - - | 352 |
| 2055 | 2083 | The Call - - - - - | 75 |
| 1625 | 2513 | The Exodus - - - - - | 430 |
| 1585 | 2553 | Death of Moses - - - - - | 40 |
| 1558 | 2580 | First servitude— <i>Conjecture</i> - - - - - | 27 |
| 1128 | 3010 | Death of Eli - - - - - | 430 |
| 1096 | 3042 | Election of Saul— <i>Conjecture</i> - - - - - | 32 |
| 1056 | 3082 | David (40 y. 6 m.) - - - - - | 40 |
| 1016 | 3122 | Solomon (39 y. 6 m.) - - - - - | 40 |
| 976 | 3162 | Rehoboam - - - - - | 40 |
| 587 | 3551 | Zedekiah's captivity - - - - - | 389 y. 1 m. |
| 573 | 3565 | Ezekiel's vision - - - - - | 14 |
| 561 | 3577 | First year of Evil Merodach - - - - - | 12 |

[370] SACRED CHRONOLOGY,

ARRANGED BY THE

MILLENNIA FROM CREATION.

FIRST EVENING.

A M

Darkness, Fall. Gen. i. 2, 5, iii.
Jer. iv. 23.1 Creation and Fall, B C 4006
Abel's death; Cain's exile.

131 Seth b.

236 Enos b.

326 Cainan b.

396 Mahalaleel b.

461 Jared b. Apostacy. Gen. vi.

MORNING.

Light, Gen. i. 3, v. 25. Pro-
phesy, Jude 14

623 Enoch b. [cycle]

688 Methuselah b. [perfect cycle]

875 Lamech b.

931 Adam d. Gen. ii. 17

988 Enoch translated, Gen. v. 24
Seventh from Adam,—prophet,
Jude 14

SECOND EVENING.

Waters under firmament, Gen.
i. 6, 8, vi. 1—7, 11—13; Psalm
xciii. 4; Isaiah xvii. 12, lvii. 20

1042 Seth d.

1057 Noah b.

Violence, Gen. vi. 11. Curse,
Gen. v. 29

1141 Enos d.

1236 Cainan d.

1291 Mahalaleel d.

1423 Jared d.

MORNING.

Firmament, Gen. i. 6, ix. 8—17;
Ezra i. 22—28Waters above firmament, Gen.
i, 7; ix, 18; xi, 9

1537 Ark preparing

Forbearance, Gen. vi, 3; 1 Peter
iii, 201557 Noah's sons b. [cycle], Gen. v, 32
Founders of New World. Gen.
ix, 19

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A M

1652 Lamech d.

1656 Methuselah d. Flood begins.
Eight saved by water, Gen. vii,
viii,

1657 Flood ends B C 2350

1659 Arphaxad b. B C 2348

1694 Salah b.

1724 Eber b.

1758 Peleg b. [cycle]

1774 Chaldean era, B C 2233

1778 Reu b.

1820 Serug b.

1850 Nahor b.

Dispersion, Gen. x, 25, 32

Seventy families, Gen. x, Deut.
xxxiii, 8.

1879 Terah b.

1949 Haran b. Gen. xi, 26

1997 Peleg d.—8 Nahor d. B C 2010

Dispersion complete

THIRD EVENING.

Land in the midst of the waters,
Gen. i, 9, 10; xii, 1—7; xv, 7
—21; xvii, Exod. vi, 1—8

2007 Noah d.

2009 Abraham b.

2019 Sarai b.

2027 Reu d.

2050 Serug d.

2084 Call of Abraham, xii, 1, B C 1923
Sojourning, 430 years, current,
[cycle]

2095 Ishmael b. æt. 86

2097 Arphaxad d.

* 2109 Isaac b. [100] B C 1898

2127 Salah d.

2159 Shem d.

2169 Esau and Jacob b. [60]

2184 Abraham d. [æt. 175]

2188 Eber dies

Last Patriarch, Gen. x, 21; xiv,
132246 Jacob's exile, Gen. xxviii, [æt.
77]

2260 Joseph b. [91]

2290 Joseph's rule, Gen. xli, [30]

2299 Descent to Egypt

| A M | |
|---|--|
| 2370 | Joseph d. [110] B C 1637 End of Genesis. |
| 2430 | Aaron b. |
| 2433 | Moses b. |
| 2473 | Moses in Midian |
| MORNING. | |
| Earth yielding fruit? Lev. xxvi; Deut. xi. | |
| 2513 | Exodus, B C 1494 |
| 2553 | Entrance to land |
| 2559 | First year of tillage, Lev. xix, 23. Josh. xiii, xiv, B C 1448 |
| Division, date of jubilees | |
| 2593? | Othniel d. |
| 2672? | Ehud. Second rest ends. Judges iii, 30 |
| 2712? | Barak and Deborah. Third rest, Judges v, 31 |
| 2751? | Gideon. Fourth rest ends, Judg- es viii, 28, 32 |
| Abimelech rules | |
| 2754? | Abimelech slain. Jub. IV |
| 2777? | Tola d. |
| 2799 | Jair d. |
| 2806 | Jephthah d. Interv. 252 yrs. Judges xi, 26 |
| 2812 | Ibzan d. |
| 2822 | Elon d. |
| 2830 | Abdon d. Philistines rule |
| 2850? | Samson d. |
| 2889 | Eli d. Ark at Kirjath, 1 Sam. iv, v |
| 2909 | Ark returns, B C 1098 Close of period, Acts xiii, 20 Samuel and Saul, xiii, 21 |
| 2949 | David at Hebron, B C 1058 |
| 2956 | David at Jerusalem, B C 1051 |
| 2989 | Solomon r. B C 1018 |
| 2992 | Temple founded, B C 1015 |
| 3000 | Dedication, Jubilee ix, B C 1007 Height of Jewish state |

FOURTH EVENING.

Light to rule the night, Gen. i, 14
—18; 2 Peter i, 19; Daniel xii, 13

| A M | | B C | |
|------|------------------------|-----|--|
| 3029 | Rehoboam, Jeroboam | 978 | |
| 3046 | Abijah 3 years - - | 961 | |
| 3049 | Asa 41 years Jubilee x | 958 | |
| 3050 | Nadab 2 years - - | 957 | |
| 3052 | Baasha 24 years | 955 | |
| 3074 | Elah 2 years - - | 933 | |
| 3075 | Zimri, Omri 12 years | 932 | |
| | — 79, Samaria built | | |
| 3086 | Ahab 22 years - - | 921 | |

| A M | | B C | |
|---|------------------------------|------|--|
| Jericho rebuilt, 1 Kings xvi | | | |
| Elijah pr. 1 Kgs. xvii | | | |
| 3090 | Jehoshaphat 25 years | 917 | |
| 3108 | Abaziah 2 years - | 899 | |
| 3110 | Joram 12 years - | 897 | |
| 3114 | Jehoram 8 years - | 893 | |
| 3120? | Elijah rapt? cycle | 887? | |
| 3121 | Abaziah 1 year - | 886 | |
| 3122 | Athaliah—Jehu 28 years | 885 | |
| 3128 | Joash 40 years - | 879 | |
| Zechariah slain, 2 Ch. xxiv, 20 | | | |
| 3143 | Jonah pr. - - - | 864 | |
| 3150 | Jehoahaz 17 years | 857 | |
| 3168 | Amaziah 29 years - | 839 | |
| Elisha d. | | | |
| 3182 | Jeroboam II, 41 years | 825 | |
| 3197 | Uzziah 52 years - | 810 | |
| 3205 | Joel pr.? - - - | 802 | |
| 3218 | Amos pr.? - - - | 789 | |
| 3231 | Era of Olympiads - | 776 | |
| 3235 | Shallum Menahem | 772 | |
| 3246 | Pekakiah - - - | 762 | |
| 3248 | Pekah - - - | 759 | |
| 3249 | Jotham 16 years - - | 758 | |
| 3254 | Era of Rome - - - | 753 | |
| Micah pr. | | | |
| 3260 | Era of Nabonassar - | 747 | |
| 3265 | Ahaz 16 years - | 742 | |
| Hosea pr. | | | |
| 3276 | Hosea 9 years - - | 731 | |
| 3278 | Captivity of Israel - | 729 | |
| 3281 | Hezekiah - - - | 726 | |
| 3286 | Samaria taken - - | 721 | |
| 3294 | Sennacherib's invasion | 713 | |
| Overthrow, Jubilee xv. Nahum, Isaiah | | | |
| 3310 | Manasseh - - - | 697 | |
| 3331 | Second captivity, Is. vii, 8 | 676 | |
| 3365 | Amon r. - - - | 642 | |
| 3367 | Josiah - - - | 640 | |
| Zephaniah and Habakkuk | | | |
| 3379 | Jeremiah begins to prophecy | 628 | |
| 3398 | Jehoahaz—May B C - | 609 | |
| Jehoiakim—August B C | | | |
| 3401 | Nebuchadnezzar - - | 606 | |
| First Empire, Dan. ii, 38; vii, 4 | | | |
| Captivity, first date, 2 Kings xxiv, 2. Isaiah xxiii, 15 | | | |
| Times of the Gentiles begin? Luke xxi | | | |
| 3404 | Daniel's first vision - | 603 | |
| 3409 | Jehoiachin 3 months, March | 598 | |
| Zedekiah 11 years, June | | | |
| 3418 | Siege of Jerusalem, Jan. | 589 | |
| 3419 | Sabbath in siege, Jer. xxxiv | 588 | |
| 3420 | Jerusalem taken, June | 587 | |
| Temple burnt, 2nd date of captivity | | | |

| A M | B C | A M | B C |
|--|-----|---|-----|
| 420 years, 70 Sabbaths, 2 Chron. xxxvi, 21 | | 3574 Sanctuary cleansed, Neh. xii - - - - - | 433 |
| 3421 Ezekiel prophes. xxxiii, 21, January - - - - - | 586 | Evening and morning, sec. date, Dan. viii, 14 | |
| 3446 Evil Merodach, Jan. Close of 2 Kings and Jer. | 561 | Close of sacred history | |
| 3448 Neriglissar | | 3576 Peloponnesian war - | 431 |
| 3451 Laborosoarchod | | 3582 Xerxes II. Sogdianus | 425 |
| 3452 Belshazzar, Daniel vii | 555 | 3583 Darius Nothus | 424 |
| 3454 Daniel's second vision | 553 | 3602 Artaxerxes Mnemon - | 405 |
| 3469 Babylon taken, Dan. v | 538 | 3603 Athens taken. Lacedemonian headship - | 404 |
| Darius the Mede, Dan. v, 31, ix | | Leopard, second head? Daniel vii, 6 | |
| 3471 Cyrus the Persian, Dan. x; Ezra i, 1 | 536 | Close of seven weeks, Dan. ix, 25 | |
| Second, or Persian Empire, Daniel ii, 32, 39; vii, 5; viii, 3, 4 | | 3636 Leuctra, Theban headship | 371 |
| Captivity, first close | | Leopard, third head? Daniel vii, 6 | |
| 3478 Cambyses, first king, Dan. xi, 2 - - - - - | 529 | 3648 Ochus | |
| 3485 Smerdis, second king, Daniel xi, 2 - - - - - | 522 | 3669 Arsēs—Philip's headship, Chaeronea - - - - - | 338 |
| 3486 Darius Hystaspes, third king | 521 | Leopard, fourth head, Dan. vii, 6 | |
| 3489 Haggai and Zechariah | 518 | 3671 Darius,—Alex. the Great | 336 |
| 3490 Jubilee xix, begins? September - - - - - | 517 | First horn of goat, Dan. viii, 5; xi, 3 | |
| 3491 Second temple dedicated | | 3676 Arbela, fall of Darius - | 331 |
| Ezra vi, 15, Feb. - - - - - | 516 | Third, or Grecian Empire, Dan. ii, 32, 39; vii, 6; viii, 5—7; xi, 3 | |
| Zerubbabel and Josh. Zec. iv, 1—9 | | 3684 Philip Aridaeus - - - - - | 323 |
| 3497 Athens freed - - - - - | 510 | 3695 Era of Seleucidæ - - - - - | 312 |
| 3499 Consuls at Rome - - - - - | 508 | Ptolemy Soter, Seleucus Nicator xi, 15 | |
| Sec. Head of 4th Beast, Rev. xvii, 10 | | 3701 Fourfold Division, Dan. viii, 8; xi, 4 - - - - - | 306 |
| | | 3722 Philadelphus, v, 6 - - - - - | 285 |
| | | 3727 Antiochus Soter - - - - - | 280 |
| | | Kingdoms of Pergamus, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bythia; Pyrrhus in Italy; Achæan league; Gauls in Greece. | |
| | | 3746 Antiochus Theus, v, 6 | 261 |
| | | 3760 Euergetes, v, 7, 9 - - - - - | 247 |
| | | Bernice and Son slain, v, 6 | |
| | | 3761 Seleucus Callinicus, v, 7, 8 | 246 |
| | | First Punic War ends | |
| | | 3781 Seleucus Ceraunus, v, 10 | 226 |
| | | 3784 Antiochus Magnus, v, 10, 13, 15 - - - - - | 223 |
| | | 3785 Philopator, v, 11 - - - - - | 222 |
| | | 3790 Battle of Raphia, v, 11, 12 | 217 |
| | | 3802 Epiphanes, v, 14 - - - - - | 205 |
| | | 3805 Battle of Zama, Second Punic war ends - - - - - | 202 |
| | | 3809 Battle of Panium, v, 15, 16 | 198 |
| | | 3811 Greece declared free - - - - - | 196 |
| | | Græco-Roman Horn, viii, 9, 10, 25; Rev. xii, 3 | |
| | | 3815 Antiochus in Greece, v, 18 | 192 |

MORNING.

Light to rule the day; dawn of the gospel, Gen. i, 16; Mal. iv, 2; Luke i, 78; 1 John ii, 8.

| A M | B C | A D |
|---------------------------------|-----|---|
| 3817 Romans in Asia, v, 18 | 190 | 117 Hadrian |
| 3820 Selencus Philopator, v, 19 | 187 | 138 Antoninus Pius |
| 3826 Philometor - - - | 181 | 161 Marcus Aurelius |
| 3832 Antiochus Epiphanes, v, 21 | 175 | Persecutions, Polycarp m. |
| 3839 Pydna, Fall of Macedon | 168 | 180 Commodus, Troubles in Empire |
| Roman Legation, Livy xlv, | | Fire cast on earth, Rev. viii, 5; |
| 11, 12; Dan. xi, 30. | | Gibb. vii. |
| <i>Fourth, or Roman Empire.</i> | | Preparation, viii, 6; Gibb. viii, |
| Dan. ii, 33, 40; vii, 7; ix, | | ix. |
| 26; xi, 31. Numb. xxiv, | | |
| 25. | | 250 Decius, persecution |
| 3845 Antiochus Eupator - | 162 | Persian and Gothic Invasions |
| 3847 Demetrius Soter - | 160 | <i>First Trumpet.</i> Rev. viii, 7, 250 |
| 3857 Alexander Bala - - | 150 | —303 |
| 3861 Demetrius Nicator, | | 253 Valerian, persecution |
| Euerg. II. - - | 146 | Goths in Asia, Franks, Alemans |
| Carthage and Corinth fall. | | 303 Diocletian's persecution |
| Dan. xi, 31. | | Travail of church, Rev. xii, 2 |
| 3925 Sulla Dictator - - | 82 | Ten days' tribulation, Rev. ii, |
| Fifth Head? Rev. xvii, 10. | | 10; Dan. xi, 33 |
| 3944 Temple profaned by Pom- | | 313 End of Persecutions |
| pey - - - | 63 | Monasticism, Rev. xii, 6; Gibb. |
| Abomination, Dan. viii, 11. | | xxxvii. |
| 3963 Cæsar's death - - | 44 | 305—323 Paganism overthrown, |
| Sixth Head, Rev. xvii, 10. | | Gibb. xiv. |
| 3982 Temple of Janus closed | 25 | Victory in heaven, Rev. xii, 7— |
| 4001 BIRTH OF CHRIST? B C | 6 | 12 |
| | | 324 <i>Empire Christian.</i> Constantino- |
| | | ple founded, Gibb. xvii, xx. |
| | | <i>Second Seal.</i> Rev. vi, 3, 4; Gibb. |
| | | xviii. |
| | | Help of the church, Dan. xi, 34 |
| | | Seventh Head, Rev. xvii, 10 |
| | | 325 Council of Nice |
| | | 336 Death of Constantine, threefold |
| | | division, Goths and Persians |
| | | Exile of Athanasius |
| | | 361 Julian Emperor |
| | | 364 Valens and Valentinian |
| | | Alemans, Burgundians, Scots, |
| | | and Persians |
| | | <i>Second Trumpet,</i> 365—476 |
| | | 378 Hadrianople, Valens' death, |
| | | Gibb. xxvi. |
| | | 379 Theodosius the Great, Gibb. |
| | | xxvii. |
| | | 381 First Council of Constantinople |
| | | Close of First Trumpet |
| | | 395 Arcadius and Honorius, Gibb. |
| | | xxix. |
| | | Separation of Latin Empire |
| | | Eagle wings given? Rev. xii, |
| | | 14 |
| | | 404 Ravenna seat of Empire, Gibb. |
| | | xxx. |
| | | Mountain cast into sea? Rev. |
| | | viii, 8 |
| | | 410 Sack of Rome by Alaric, Gibb. |
| | | xxxi. |
| | | Third part, blood, viii, 9 |
| | | Britain revolts; Goths, Sueves, |

FIFTH EVENING.

Living creatures in the seas.
Gen. i, 20. Ez. xlvii, 9—
11. Matt. iv, 18; xiii, 47.
Kingdom of the Stone, Dan.
ii, 34.

Depression of Visible Church.

| A D |
|---|
| 27? Baptism of John, Luke iii, 1 |
| Sixty-two weeks close, Dan. |
| ix, 24, 26 |
| 30 CRUCIFIXION, ASCENSION? |
| Pentecostal Church, Rev. |
| xii, 1 |
| 41 Call of Gentiles, Dan. xi, 32 |
| 53 Council of Jerusalem, Is. ii, 3 |
| St. Paul in Greece, Zech. ix, 13 |
| 62 St. Paul at Rome, Dan. xi, 33; |
| Gen. viii, 27 |
| 70 Fall of Jerusalem |
| <i>First Seal.</i> Rev. vi, 2; Dan. ix, |
| 26 |
| Literal abomination, Daniel xi, |
| 31 |
| Triumphs of Gospel, Gibb. xv. |
| Persecutions, Dan. xi, 32, 33; |
| viii, 12; Rev. xii, 4; Gibb. xvi. |
| 81 Domitian—St. John in Patmos |
| 96 Close of Sacred Canon |
| 98 Trajan—Pliny, Bithynian perse- |
| cution |

A D

- Almans, Vandals, Burgundians, &c.
 412 Religious war of the East, Gibb. xlvii.
Third Trumpet, Rev. viii, 10
 431 Council of Ephesus
 451 Council of Chalcedon
 476 Fall of Western Empire, Gibb. xxxvi.
 Second trumpet ending
 Seventh head falls, Rev. xvii, 10; xiii, 3
 Odoacer, King of Italy, Dan. vii, 8, 20, 24. *First King*
 Beast rising from the sea, Rev. xiii, 1
 493 Ostrogoths in Italy
Second King. Dan. vii, 8

MORNING.

- Exaltation of visible church
 533 Justinian's Code; Empire orthodox, Gibb. xlv.
Third Seal. Rev. vi, 5, 6.
 Wars of Belisarius, Rev. xii, 16; Gibb. xli.
 Time, times and half? Dan vii, 25; Rev. xi, 3; xii, 14
 Mystical Abomination, Dan. xi, 31; xii, 11
 553 Ostrogoths overthrown, Gibb. xliii.
 Second Council of Constantinople
 Second King uprooted, Dan. vii, 8
 565 Death of Justinian
Fourth Trumpet, Rev. viii, 12, 565—622
 568 Lombards conquer Italy, Gibb. xlviii.
 Third King, Dan. vii, 8
 602 Phocas, Persian War, Gibb. xlvi.
 Darkening of East, Gibb. xlviii.
 608 Pantheon dedicated; Mahomet's preaching
Fifth Trumpet. Rev. ix, 1, 2; Gibb. xxviii.
 Ten Kingdoms; Beast from the sea rises, Rev. xiii, 1; xvii, 12
 Forty-two months? Rev. xi, 2; xiii, 5
 612 Islamism begins, Gibb. 1.
 622 Hegira, or flight of Mahomet
 637 Jerusalem taken, Rev. ix, 11?
Locust, or *Saracen* woe, Rev. ix, 3
 647 Saracens invade Africa
 660 Paulicians, Gibb. xlix; Rev. viii, 13?

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A D

- 666 Papal authority in Britain
 Latin service in the churches pressed by Vitalian
 680 Third Council of Constantinople
 698 Carthage falls
 710 Saracens in Spain
 728 Greg. II, Revolt of Rome, Gibb. xlix
 Little horn risen, Dan. vii, 8
 762 Bagdad founded, City of Peace
 774 Lombards overthrown
 Third King uprooted, Dan. vii, 8
 Rise of second beast, Rev. xiii, 11
 786 Harun Al Rashed, 2
 Saracen Empire at height
Five months end, Rev. ix, 5
 787 Second Council of Nice
 800 Charlemagne crowned, Gibb. xlix
Seventh Head revives, Rev. xiii, 3
 869 Fourth Council of Constantinople, and last Eastern General Council
 936 Fall of Caliphate
End of Locust woe, Rev. ix, 12
 988 Conversion of Russia, Gibb. lv
 Christendom complete, A M, 4994
 Height of visible church

SIXTH EVENING.

- Living Creatures of the earth—
 Christian Politics established
 Depression of true Church
 997 The Turks, Mahmud the Gaznevide first Sultan, A M 5003, Gibb. lvii
 Angel of the East? Rev. ix, 14
 1009 Jerusalem raised, Fatimite Caliphs
 Angel of the South? Rev. ix, 14
 1016 Normans in Italy, Gibb. lvi
 1060 Normans conquer Sicily
 1066 Normans conquer England
 Angel of the North?
 1063 Alp Arslan crosses Euphrates
 Armenia and Georgia lost
Sixth Trumpet, Rev. ix, 13
 Month and year, or 390 days?
 1073 Hildebrand
 Power of second Beast, Rev. xiii, 11
Fourth Seal, Rev. 6, 7
 1081 Normans invade East
 1095 Council of Clermont
 First Crusade, Franks and Normans against the Saracens and Turks
 1098 Jerusalem won from Saracens
 Days of Chivalry, Rev. ix, 14, 16
 1123 First Lateran Council

- A D**
 1139 Second Lateran Council
 1147 Second Crusade
 1179 Third Lateran Council
 1189 Third Crusade. Richard I, Lion-hearted
 1198 Innocent III. John in England
 Fourth Crusade. Height of second Beast
 1203 Latins take Constantinople
 1206 Mogul Empire begins
 1207 Crusades against Albigenses, Rev. xiii, 12?
 1209 Interdict on England, xiii, 13
 1215 Fourth Lateran Council
 1243 Close of Albigensian Crusades
 1245 Council of Lyons
 1261 Greek Empire restored
 1274 Second Council of Lyons
 1299 Othman invades the East
 1311 Council of Vienna
 1326 Prusa taken
 1353 Ottomans in Europe
 1370 Timour reigns
 1378 Great Schism of the West
 1396 Last Crusade
 1409 Council of Pisa
 1414 Council of Constance
 Jerome and Huss burnt, Rev. xiii, 15
 1431 Council of Basil
 1433 Council of Florence
 Re-union of Eastern Church, ix, 20, 21. Empire Papal
Fifth Seal. Rev. vi, 3
 1453 Fall of Eastern Empire, May 29
 Month and year end? Rev. ix, 15
 Papal despotism at height, xiii, 14—18; ix, 20, 21
 Witnessess lie slain, Rev. xi, 7, 8
 1492 Discovery of America by Columbus

MORNING.

- Exaltation of true Church, Gen. i, 26; ii, 21—24; Rev. xix, 7—9; Eph. v
 Revival of learning, 1453—1517; Rev. x, 1?
 1514 Fifth Lateran Council, 9th Session
 Exposure of witnesses, Rev. xi, 9
 Embassies, Indulgences, &c. xi, 10

- A D**
 1517 REFORMATION, Theses of Luther
 Witnesses revive, Rev. xi, 11
 1521 Diet of Worms
 Re-prophesying, Rev. x, 11
 1529 Protestation at Spires, xi, 1?
 1556 Edward VI; Council of Trent;
 Luther dies; Altar measured?
 Court cast out? Rev. xi, 1, 2
 1552 Treaty of Passau
 Time of the end? Dan. xii, 4, 9; Rev. x, 8
 1553 Mary, Persecution in England
 Cry of the Martyrs? Rev. vi, 10
 1558 Elizabeth; English Establishment
 1588 Spanish Armada
 1648 Peace of Westphalia
 Charles I, beheaded; Commonwealth
 1688 English Revolution
 1789 French Revolution
 Tenth part falls, Rev. xi, 13
First Vial, Rev. xvi, 2
Sixth Seal, Rev. vi, 12
 1792 Jacobinism throughout Europe
Empire Infidel; French Republic
 Era of liberty; Infidel Calendar
 Era of missions, xi, 12; xiv, 15?
 Close of 1260 days? xi, 3; xii, 14
 1793 French Atheism; Reign of Terror
Second Vial, Rev. xvi, 3
 1795 Directory; Conscription
 Italian Campaigns; French Victories
Third Vial, Rev. xvi, 4
 1802 Napoleon Supreme; Popery restored
Fourth Vial, Rev. xvi, 8
 1815 Empire headless; Fall of Napoleon
Seventh Seal, Rev. viii, 1; vii, 1
 Occupation of France 3 years
Fifth Vial, Rev. xvi, 10; Ex. x, 22
 Congress of Four Powers at Vienna
Pause in Heaven, vii, 1; viii, 1
 1822 Greek Independence; wasting of Turkish empire
Sixth Vial, Rev. xvi, 12
 Close of 1290 days; time of end?
 Dan. xii, 11; xi, 40
 Preaching of Second Advent,
 Rev. xvi, 15. A M 5828

III.

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT OF PROPHECY.

[377] God has given, through the deep and prolonged researches of his servants, much insight in the prophetic writings. The most valuable truth has been attained by increased investigation in the track of the older writers, with the farther light that history has afforded. Even the Jewish Rabbis, as well as the early writers of the Christian church, assisted Mede, the father of modern interpretation. More, Cressener, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Woodhouse, &c. all followed, asking *for the old ways, and walking in them*. Jer. vi. 16. Some modern works have too much, however, disregarded what previous writers have said, and others have set them wholly aside, as groundless interpretations.

But even by the most defective works, men's minds have been exercised the more to find out the truth, and a hint in a very erroneous general interpretation, has sometimes led to a valuable discovery; so that no candid, diligent student, need be discouraged by failures in times past.

The author has given a much fuller list of writers on prophecy than he intended; but it may have its advantages. Any knowledge of the writings of such varied authors is calculated to lead us to CAUTION AND MODESTY, in the explanation of unfulfilled prophecy. The great lessons taught by so many varied interpretations, have already been noticed. Would there were more of a holy awe on all our minds, of intruding on the glories of him, who takes it as his peculiar character, to *declare things to come*, (Isaiah xli. 22,) and to *shew the things that are coming, and shall come*. Isaiah xliv. 7. We cannot and should not go a step farther than the scripture leads us, and in the interpretations of that scripture, it is very needful to keep everything within that scriptural limit which the comparing spiritual things with spiritual marks out.

The different interpretations of the servants of Christ are calculated [378] also to guard against a PRECIPITATE JUDGMENT, and a hasty public expression of such a judgment. The first impression of fresh views are as if a new light had been almost supernaturally given to us; but a little time for waiting may greatly modify these views.

No one can look at the names of these authors in the follow-

ing List without seeing, that questions of **CHURCH GOVERNMENT** and **DOCTRINAL VIEWS** are unconnected with any particular interpretation of prophecy. Though, generally, sound scriptural principles are connected with the most valuable views of prophecy, yet it must be admitted that members of the most opposite denominations, and Christians holding very opposite sentiments in doctrine, often concur in the same views; and persons who are of the same denomination, or the same sentiments in doctrine, hold very opposing views of the same prophecy. It is hoped that this may dispel the alarm which some have felt, as if an attention to the subject was necessarily connected with serious mistake in doctrines.

The error likely to arise from the great apparent plausibility of some interpretations may be checked by the similar plausibility of opposite interpretations, and we may be sure nothing but the true counterpart of history will meet all the lines drawn in the original Document of Prophecy.

It is by no means recommended to readers in general to attempt to procure, or to read all the books here mentioned. It would only tend to confuse and distract the mind. A few of the most really useful have already been mentioned, and some notices are given of others in the following list. Providence often graciously puts us in the way of books, and of guides really useful to us; only let us not follow a vain curiosity, or self-will, but look upward for divine direction.

Those who have most usefully and successfully written on Prophecy have, as it has been noticed, availed themselves of the expositions given by their predecessors. Dean Woodhouse, who began simply by studying it on his own resources, unaided except by Bishop Hurd's introduction, found it valuable afterwards to make free use of the stores provided by others. It is the remark of another not unsuccessful writer, "In almost all authors on this subject, I have met with something that appeared to me excellent; [379] though differing in numerous instances from all, yet I have gathered a little from one and a little from another."

The variety of new systems of the Apocalypse is a serious evil, and it is hoped that the present List of Books may help to check this evil. Men of talents, and imagination, and piety, are in danger of forming to themselves a system of the Apocalypse, without any careful study of even leading writers, who have gone before them. With great ingenuity they turn the figures of this book to their own views, and build up a beautiful theory; parts of which may indeed be true; but not having cautiously gone over the ground, nor duly considered the researches of their predecessors, they lose the benefit of length-

ened experience, and the church loses that full benefit, which their ability and piety, directed to the elucidation of this book, might have imparted. The warning against false prophets (Matt. xxiv. 21—24) may teach both authors and readers, the danger of a false interpretation of prophecy, calculated to *deceive the very elect*.

It was the just remark of Sir Isaac Newton, a century back, "If the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching (as by the great success of the late interpreters it seems to be) we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the gospel be approaching, it is to us and our posterity that these words mainly belong: *In the time of the end the wise shall understand.*" Dan. xii. 9, 10.

The preaching of the gospel has taken place: "The main revolution," which Newton mentions "as not yet come to pass," many believe has come to pass; and the following List of Books will shew how extensively the servants of Christ, in the last half century, have turned their attention to prophecy. The Book is sealed to the time of the end, but then it is predicted, *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*, (Dan. xii. 4;) and this list may show that these things are now taking place, and encourage every reader to a diligent study of prophecy.

GENERAL WORKS ON PROPHECY.

The principal JEWISH COMMENTATORS are Kimchi, Aben Ezra, Aberbanel, R. S. Jarchi, &c. Schoetgen, Stehelin's Rabbinical [380] Literature (2 vols. 8vo. 1748), and Wotton's Discourses, give information on the religious notions of the Jews.

The views of THE FATHERS generally, on the subject of the Prophecies, must be sought for in the Commentaries which they have left on the various books of Scripture, and in incidental remarks in the earlier Fathers, who left no Commentaries, as Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, &c. The principal Commentators among the Fathers are Origen, Chrysostom, Eusebius, Jerom, Cyril, Ephraim Syrus, Gregory, Hilary, Augustine, Theodoret, Theophylact, &c. In Origen's work against Celsus, he illustrates the prophecies concerning Christ.

The incidental testimonies of the early Fathers, Latin and Greek, especially those of the three first centuries, to the personal coming and reign of Christ, are quoted by Homes on the Millennium, Burnet, in his Theory of the Earth, Greswell, in

the first volume of his work on the Parables, Anderson's Apology, and in the Prophetical periodicals. After the Roman Empire became professedly Christian, and then really Antichristian, the præ-millennial coming of Christ was discountenanced. Various testimonies to sentiments similar to those of the early Fathers, from Jewish writers, and from the early Protestants, and their successors, are collected and given by Mr. Homes.

At the time of THE REFORMATION, and shortly afterwards, many valuable Commentaries were published on the Prophetical Books; and though writers generally anticipated events, and many thought the Millennium past, and the day of judgment near, yet there is very much that is practical, holy, and useful in their expositions, and it would have been well if more attention had been subsequently paid to the system of illustrating scripture by exposition. There is a condensed view of the sentiments of the principal Reformers on those books, in the valuable Expositions of Marloratus on Genesis, the Psalms, Isaiah, and the New Testament.

The Reformers generally considered Popery as the Antichrist,* [381] and this sentiment powerfully aided them in the great work of Reformation.

The commentaries of the Fathers, and Reformers, and the writings of Brightman, Napier, Alstedius, &c. preceded Mede, but his works were eminently blessed in reviving attention to prophecy.

Mede (Jos.) Works. Folio, 1677. His *Clavis Apocalyptica* was published in 1627.

Invaluable Expositions of various Prophecies, deserving and repaying the closest study.

Molinæ (P.) Vates. 8vo. 1640.

Tillinghast (John.) Generation Work. 3 Parts, 12mo. 1655.

Knowledge of the Times. 12mo. 1654. Eight Last Sermons. 12mo. 1654.

Tillinghast is a superior writer, both in practical and Evangelical sentiment, and in prophetical knowledge; and though he prematurely applied predictions, his work contains much that is useful.

Willis (Thos.) A Word in season for a warning to England, or a Prophecy of perilous times opened and applied. 12mo. 1659.

* Calvin says, "Papistæ Antichristum imaginati sunt, per tres Annos et dimidium vexaturus sit Ecclesiam. Omnes notæ quibus Antichristum designat Spiritus, in Papa clare apparent: sed ille triennalis Antichristus Papistas tenet occupatos ne videndo videant." See on 1 John ii. 18.

- An application of 2 Tim. iii. 1, to the times of the Author.
- Smith* (J.) Discourses. See Discourse six. 4to. 1673.
- Allen* (Wm.) The State of the Church in Future Ages. 12mo. 1684.
- Jurieu* (Peter.) Accomplishment of the Scripture Prophecies. 8vo. 3 vols. 1687-8.
- Beverley* (Thos.) Many Works, in 4to. from 1687 to 1701.
- Witsh* (Herm.) De Prophetis et Prophetia Misc. Sacra. 4to. 1692.
- Kortholt* (C.) De Tribus Impostoribus. Herbert, Hobbes Spinosa. 4to. 1701.
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Petrie (Alex.) *Chilastro,—Mastix,—the Kingdom of our Saviour Vindicated from the misrepresentations of the Millennarians.* 4to. 1644.

This was answered in *Maton's Israel's Redemption Redeemed.*

Amyraut (M.) *Du Regne de Mille Ans.* 12mo. 1655.

Tillinghast (John.) *On the Millennium.* 12mo. 1655.

A Sober Inquiry, or Christ's Reign with his Saints a Thousand Years, modestly asserted from the Scripture. 8vo. 1660.*

* The agreement of Christians respecting the personal coming of our Lord is so interesting a point, that I cannot forbear quoting a statement of it, as given in the Preface to the "Sober Inquiry, or Christ's reign with his Saints." "All agree that,"—

(1) Jesus Christ will come personally, visibly, and corporeally from heaven to earth, at the day of judgment, Acts i. 11. Job. xix. 25.

- Oxendringe* (John.) *A Double Watchword, or the Duty of Watching, and Watching to Duty.* 8vo. 1661.
- Multum in Parvo*, or the Jubilee of Jubilees, being a Description of the Great Millennium. 8vo. 1732.
- Spes Fidelium*, or the Believers' Hope; a Dissertation proving the Thousand Years' Reign of Christ. By a Presbyter of the Church of England—supposed to be Dr. Grabe or Dr. Lee. 8vo. 1714.
- Sherwin* (W.) *Several Tracts from 1665 to 1667.* In 4to. by him.
- Holmes* (Nath.) *The Resurrection Revealed.* Folio. 1654. *Miscellanea Sacra.* Folio. 1656. Republished. 8vo. 1831. A valuable work. A reply was published by M. Hall. 12mo.
- Hall* (Thos.) *A Confutation of the Millenarian Opinion, in reply to Dr. Homes.* 18mo. 1657.
- Fleming* (Robt.) *In his Christology.* Vol. 3. *A Dissertation on the First Resurrection.* 8vo. 1708.
- Whitby* (Dan.) *On the Millennium.* 1718. (In his Commentary, one of the chief writers for a spiritual resurrection.)
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(2) When Christ thus comes, he will bring with him the souls of all his saints, according to Zechariah xiv. 5; and 1 Thess. iv. 14.

(3) Their bodies shall be immediately raised out of their graves, and the souls and body joined and united together, and though the soul continues; remains, and is in heaven without the body, yet on earth it shall not be so.

(4) When it is thus raised in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 42; Col. iii. 4; and not thenceforth subject any more to sin or sorrow, to mutation or mortality, to the want of meat or drink, or clothing, or houses, or marriages, or any other comfort, but shall be as the angels. Mark xii. 25.

(5) This resurrection of the saints shall be some time before the resurrection of the wicked: they shall have the pre-eminence, and be the first in order and time, (I say not how long) and the wicked shall not rise till some time, more or less, afterwards. 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 4—6.

(6) The Lord Jesus will be some time in judging the world. He will not hurry all over in a moment, but make some stay on the earth, not as though he had need of time; but as he took a space of time in creation, so he will take some space of time on earth to do what he will then do to judge and conclude all things.

(7) While Christ stays on the earth (let it be a longer or a lesser time) the saints also must stay, and not go to heaven, until Christ goes and carries them up with him.

(8) It must needs be a very glorious time, while it lasts, when Christ shall have removed his court from heaven to earth, and be in his glory, attended with angels, environed with all his saints, who are also all of them in their glory. O how can such a time be, while it lasts, less than a glorious time.

(9) The only difference will be in the length of time how long this day of judgment or kingdom of Christ, or reign of the saints shall last."

It must also, however, be added, that, by the too generally accredited system of 1000 years intervening before the coming of Christ, a most material difference is made; so as greatly to interfere with the direct practical use of his coming again.

Burnet (Thos.) *State of the Dead, and those that are to Rise.* 2 vols. 8vo. 1728.

Rudd (Sayer.) *Essay towards a new Explication of the Doctrines of the Resurrection and Millennium.* 8vo. 1734.
Several useful thoughts.

Apocalyptica Cabala; a History of the Millennium. 8vo. 1741.

Greenhill (Jos.) *Several Sermons and Tracts, from 1755 to 1774.* 8vo.

Hartley (Thos.) *Paradise Restored.* 8vo. 1764.

Bellamy (Jos.) *Sermon on the Millennium.* 12mo. 1787.

Baggs (John.) *Scriptural View of the Millennium.* 8vo. 1797.

Corrodi (H.) *A Critical History of Chiliasm.* Zurich. 4 vols. 8vo.

Bingham (Geo.) *An Essay on the Millennium.* 2 vols. 8vo. 1804.

Lambert (le P.) *Exposition des Predictions, et des Promesses, faites à l'Eglise, pour les derniers temps de la Gentilite.* 2 vols. 12mo. 1806.

A striking testimony to the pre-millennial advent, restoration of the Jews, and reign of Christ, by a French Roman Catholic.

Hopkins (S.) *On the Millennium.* 12mo. 1809.

Taylor (Thos.) *Discourses on the Millennium.* 12mo. 1809.

Bogue (David.) *On the Millennium.* 8vo. 1818.

There are some just remarks on this work, in *Vint's New Illustration of Prophecy.*

Hawtrey (C. S.) *The First Resurrection, by a Spiritual Watchman.* 12mo. 1820.

Sherwood (Mrs.) *The Millennium.* 12mo. 1830. *The Latter Days.* 12mo. 1833.

Nolan (F.) *The Time and Nature of the Millennium.* 8vo. 1831.

Jackson (J. L.) *The Holy Catholics, and Millennial Church.* 12mo. 1831.

Pym (W.) *Thoughts on Millenarianism.* Third Edition. 1831.

Begg (James A.) *Connected View of the Scriptural Evidence of the Redeemer's Return and Reign.* 12mo. 1831.

Mejanel (Pierre.) *Les Derniers Convulsions du Monde Perissant.* 8vo. 1831.

Gipps (H.) *A Treatise on the First Resurrection.* 12mo. 1831.

Mr. Gipps thinks that it is only a spiritual resurrection. It is the best treatise on that side of the question, and written by a devoted Christian.

Bush (Geo.) *A Treatise on the Millennium.* New York. 12mo. 1832.

Written on the principle that the Millennium is past, and an able modern statement of that unfounded and unsatisfactory opinion.

Sirr (J. D'Arcy.) First Resurrection considered; a Reply to a Treatise of the late H. Gipps. 12mo. 1833.

An able answer to Mr. Gipps' Treatise.

Cox (John.) Millenarian's Answer of his Hope. 1832.

Cunninghame (W.) Review of Dr. Wardlaw's Sermon. 12mo. 1833.

Biddulph (T. T.) An Essay on the Doctrine of the First Resurrection. 8vo. 1834.

Though the Author has come to a different conclusion, he gladly records that the strength of the argument for a spiritual resurrection is here stated in the meekness of wisdom and love:

Anderson (W.) A Letter to the Author of 'Millenarianism Indefensible.' 12mo. 1834.

Greswell (Edw.) Exposition of the Parables. 8vo. 6 vols. 1834.

A valuable defence of the Millennium in the First Volume. Short Treatise on the Millennium; showing the Reign of Christ to be Spiritual. 12mo. 1834.

Apology for Millenarianism. 8vo. 1836.

Millenarianism Unscriptural; or a Glance at the Consequences of that Theory. 12mo. 1838.

See note, page 67.

Jefferson (John.) The Millennium a Spiritual State, and not a Personal Reign. 18mo. 1839.

An unsatisfactory and self-contradictory exposition of Rev. xx. not noticing former answers that have been given to the views of this Author; who assumes many opinions in those who hold a literal resurrection which they reject, and gives insufficient answers to those they do hold. His practical remarks at the close are, however, truly good.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Irenei (D.) Opera, folio. See especially his Fifth Book against Heresies. Fol.

Lactantii (L. C.) Opera, 8vo. See Book 7 of his Divine Institutions on the Blessed Life hereafter.

The Holy Rest of God; the Throne, Kingdom, and Glory of Christ. 4to. 1641.

Archer (John.) The Personal Reign of Christ on Earth. 4to. 1634.

Hammon (G.) Truth and Innocency. On the Personal Reign. 4to. 1650.

Maton (Robt.) Treatise of Fifth Monarchy; or, Christ's Personal Reign on Earth. 1665.

Knollis (H.) Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven expounded. 12mo. 1674.

Baxter (Rich.) The glorious Kingdom of Christ. 4th. 1691. Written on the basis of a past millennium.

Sterry (Peter.) The Rise, Race, and Royalty of the Kingdom of God, and the Appearances of God to Man. 2 vols. 4to. 1683—1710.

A very obscure writer.

Mather (J.) Discourse concerning Faith and Fervency in Prayer, and the glorious Kingdom of the Lord. 24mo. 1740.

Perry (W.) Glory of Christ's Visible Kingdom. 12mo. 1721. Contains an exposition of the principal texts upon the subject, plain, practical, and often sensible; but anticipating the time.

Hort (Robt.) A Sermon on the glorious Kingdom of Christ. 8vo. 1748.

Clarke (Alex.) View of the Glory of Messiah's Kingdom. 8vo. 1763.

Koppin (J. B.) Excursus in Epist. Pauli ad Thessalon. 8vo. 1791.

Given also in the Investigator.

Bayford (John.) Messiah's Kingdom. 8vo. 1820.

Sabin (J. E.) The Kingship of Jesus. 12mo. 1832.

Cox (John.) Thoughts on the Coming and Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. 12mo. 1839.

A very edifying and useful work.

Maurice (F.) The Kingdom of Christ; or, Hints on the Principles, Ordinances, and Constitution of the Catholic Church. 3 vols. 12mo. 1838.

A work not directly prophetic, but with many original, striking, and useful thoughts on the various opinions in the church, and tending to enlarge the mind and heal divisions.

COMMENTATORS.

The Author has, in his Christian Student, given full Lists of Commentators on the Scriptures in general; and such Lists may be found in Hartwell Horne, Orme's Bibliotheca, &c. He has already also mentioned the Fathers, and Reformers. His object here is to name only such as give fuller attention to, or are more useful in the interpretation of the Prophetic Scriptures. Gill, Scott, and most other Commentators, illustrate the more direct Prophetic Writings.

WHOLE BIBLE.

Coccei (J.) *Commentarii in Sacra Scripturas.* Folio. 12 vols. 1706.

"Often fanciful, but learned, pious, and far more discerning in the true scope of prophecy, than many who succeeded him."

Apthorp.

Religious Tract Society Commentary. 6. vols. 12mo. and royal 8vo.

There are many valuable extracts from modern Prophetical Writers.

Well's (Edw.) *Paraphrase of the Old and New Testament.* 6 vols. 4to. 1711—1729.

Many useful hints on the Prophecies in this work, though the tone of doctrine is not what could be wished.

Suggestions on Scripture Interpretation. 12mo. 1836.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Horsley (Sam.) *Biblical Criticism.* 4 vols. 8vo, 1820. Sermons, 8vo. Twenty-six Letters in the *British Magazine* for 1834. Sermons, &c.

Bishop Horsley's works in general throw much light on Prophecy, though he is dogmatic, and sometimes speculative, and uses inconclusive arguments.

Jarchi (R. S.) *Commentarius Hebraicus, Latine versus a J. F. Breithaupto.* 1710—14. 3 vols. 4to.

Durel (David.) *Prophecies of Jacob and Moses.* Hebrew Translation and Notes. 4to. 1764.

PSALMS.

Augustine's remark, quoted by Keble in his *Psalter*, is important. "You will hardly find a word in the Psalms, but it is spoken in the name of Christ and the Church, either both jointly, or one of the two singly: and if of the Church, then of each one amongst us."

Kimchi (David.) *Commentarii.* 4to. 1666.

Allix (Peter.) *The Book of Psalms, with the Argument of each, and a Preface on their Interpretation.* 8vo. 1701.

Horsley (Bp.) *The Book of Psalms.* Translated with Notes. 8vo. 1824.

Many original and useful hints, but adventurous.

Fry (John.) *New Translation of.* 8vo. 1819.

Containing illustrations of the prophetical character of the

Psalms, on the plan of Bishop Horsley, and Mr. Allix, but much farther extended than Horsley, or perhaps than can be justly maintained.

CANTICLES.*

Davidson (Wm.) Explanations of the Song of Solomon. 8vo. 1817.

Alstedius (J. H.) Trifolium Propheticum. Cantici, Daniel, Apocalypsis. 4to. 1640.

Brightman (Thos.) A Commentary on the Canticles. 4to. 1644.

Viewed prophetically.

Fry (John.) Song of Solomon. 8vo. 1825.

Durham (James.) Clavis Cantica. 4to. 1668.

PROPHETS.

Pocock (Edw.) Commentary on Hosea, Joel, Micah, Malachi. Folio. 1691-2.

Lowth (Will.) A Commentary upon the Larger and Lesser Prophets. Folio. 1739.

Many valuable hints on the Prophecies.

Newcome (Abp.) Improved Version of the Twelve Minor Prophets. 8vo. 1785 and 1809.

Smith (John.) Summary View of the Prophets. 12mo. 1787.

Drusius (J.) Lectiones in XII. Prophetas Minores. 8vo. 1627.

Pick (A.) A Literal Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, with Notes from Jewish Writers. 1833.

ISAIAH.

White (Samuel.) A Commentary where the Literal Sense of the Prophecies are briefly explained. 4to. 1609.

An ultra literalist, but not without his use; follows Grotius.

* Among the varied views taken of this Mystical Book, the Author most acquiesces in that which considers it as a beautiful allegory, prophetic of the state of the church, and also subverting a rich exhibition of Christian experience. "By the received usage of Polygamy," says Aphorp, "the mystic King is represented as having contracted a double marriage, first, with a Jewish queen, and afterwards with a Gentile princess, the daughter of the King of Egypt, the fittest type of idolatrous superstition, and under the figure of the two queens are expressed the different fortunes, the emulation, and final concord of the Jewish and Gentile churches." To this statement I would only add, that in the mean while, for the instruction, quickening, and comfort of all, it portrays, in a most lively way, the varied experience, feelings, and desires of the individual believer towards his beloved Saviour.

Vitringa (Camp.) *Commentarius in Librum Isaiaë*. Folio. 1714—1720.

Louth (Bp.) *A new Translation of*. 1778.
Various Editions.

Fraser (Alex.) *A Commentary on. Being a Paraphrase with Notes, shewing the Literal Meaning of the Prophecy*. 8vo. 1800.

Much light is thrown on passages by the principles here adopted.

Jenour (Alfred.) *A new Translation*. 2 vols. 8vo. 1832.

JEREMIAH.

Venema (Herman.) *Commentarii ad Librum Jeremiæ*. 2 vols. 4to. 1765.

Blayney (Benj.) *A New Translation with Notes*. 8vo. 1810.

EZEKIEL.

Alleine (Wm.) *The Mystery of the Temple and City of Ezekiel described*. 12mo. 1679.

Meade (Mat.) *The Vision of the Wheels opened and applied*. 12mo. 1689.

Newcome (Abp.) *An Improved Version and Explanation*. 4to. 1788.

Venema (Herm.) *Lectiones Academicæ*. 2 vols. 4to. 1790.

Starckii (J. F.) *Commentarius in Ezechielem*. 4to. 1731.

A great mass of useful and practical matter in this work, with doctrines drawn from each verse.

Penn (Gran.) *The Prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog*. 8vo. 1814.

Greenhill (W.) *Exposition of Ezekiel*. 5 vols. 4to. 1645—58.

Very scarce. It is practical and useful.

Bennett (Sol.) *The Temple of Ezekiel Elucidated*. 4to. 1824.

DANIEL.

Rollock (Rob.) *Comm. in Librum Danielis*. 4to. 1591.

Considered by Dr. M'Crie as one of the best of his Commentaries.

Jachiadae (J.) *Paraphrasis in Danielelem*. 4to. 1633.

Huet (Ephraim.) *The whole prophecy of Daniel explained*. 4to. 1643.

Brightman (Thomas.) *Exposition of the last part of Daniel*. 4to. 1644.

Parker (Thomas.) *Visions and Prophecy expounded.* 4to. 1646.

Canne (John.) *The Time of the End.* 8vo. 1658.

More (Henry.) *Exposition of Daniel.* 4to. 1681.

There were remarks on this and his book on the Apocalypse, in 1690, 4to. More published also—*Answers to Remarks*, 4to. 1684,—*Supplements and Defences*, 4to. 1685,—*Paralipomena Prophetica*, 4to. 1685,—*Notes on Daniel and the Apocalypse*, 4to. 1685.

Witsh (H.) *Dissertatio de IV. Bestiis Danielis in Miscellan. Sac. Diss. IV.*

Geieri (M.) *Prælectiones Academicæ.* Folio. 1696.

The Vision and Prophecies of Daniel, explained according to the measure of the Gift of Christ. 12mo. 1700.

Many useful remarks in this book, written by a humble, devout, and spiritually-minded Christian, not holding a pre-millennial advent.

Wells (Henry.) *Commentary on.* 4to. 1716.

Newton (Sir Isaac.) *Observations on the Prophecies.* 4to. 1733. 8vo. 1832.

Very valuable.

Venema (Herman.) *Dissertationes.* 2 vols. 4to. 1745, 1752.

Caverhill (Dr.) *Explanation of the Seventy Weeks.* 8vo. 1777.

Wintle (Thos.) *An Improved Version and Notes.* 4to. 1792.

Zouch (Thomas.) *An Inquiry into the Prophetic Character of the Romans; Dan. viii. 23.* 8vo. 1792.

Faber (G. S.) *Dissertation on the 70 Weeks.* 8vo. 1811.

Rous (M. F.) *Exposition of the Prophecies; translated by Dr. Henderson.* 8vo. 1811.

Ettrick (W.) *Season and Time the two periods after 1260 Years.* 8vo. 1816.

Wilson (Jos.) *Dissertations.* 8vo. 1824.

Stonard (John.) *A Dissertation on the 70 Weeks.* 8vo. 1826.

Fry (John.) *The Epocha of Daniel's Prophetic Numbers fixed.* 8vo. 1828.

Irving (Edward.) *Discourses on Daniel's Four Beasts.* 8vo. 1830.

Cox (F. A.) *Outlines of Lectures on Daniel.* 8vo. 1833.

HOSEA.

Hosea cum Comment. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, et Kimchi. 4to. 1621.

Coddaeus (W.) *Annotationes in Comment. trium Rabbiorum.* 4to. 1621.

Horsley (Bp.) Translation with Notes. 4to. 1804. (Included also in his *Biblical Criticism*.)

ZECHARIAH.

Floyer (Sir John.) Comment on Zechariah and Malachi. 8vo. 1721.

Kimchi (David.) Commentary on Zechariah, translated from the Hebrew, with Notes. By A. M'Caul. 8vo. 1836.

Venema (Herm.) Commentarius. 4to. 1787.

MALACHI.

Venema (Herm.) Commentarius. 4to. 1759.

NEW TESTAMENT.

(See Commentaries in the Author's 'Christian Student.')

Hardman (Ed.) Explanatory and Practical Comments on the New Testament. 2 vols. 8vo. 1830-32.

Several useful hints on prophetical passages: published before his views became warped.

Newcome (Abp.) , An Attempt towards Revising our English Translation of the Greek Scriptures, or the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. 2 vols. 8vo. 1796.

Archbishop Newcome here asserts the personal coming and reign of our Lord, and first resurrection of his saints.

II THESSALONIANS.

Bradshaw (Wm.) Exposition. 4to. 1620.

Squire (John.) Plain Exposition. 4to. 1630.

Manton (Thos.) Sermons on 2 Thess. ii. 8vo. 1679.

Baxter (Richard.) The Glorious Kingdom of Christ Described and clearly Vindicated. 4to. 1691.

Answering Beverley, and supposing the Millennium past.

HEBREWS.

Mandeville (Viscount.) *Horæ Hebraicæ*, and Appendices on Messiah's Kingdom, &c. 8vo. 1835.

Much learning and piety, but wanting in discriminating application.

II PETER.

Knight (James.) A Discourse on the Conflagration and Renovation of the Earth. 8vo. 1748.

Hull (John.) St. Peter's Prophecy of these Last Days. 4to. 1611.

Whitaker (E. W.) Survey of the Doctrine and Arguments of St. Peter's Epistles. 12mo. 1666.

REVELATION.

Arethae (Cæsareæ.) Explanations in Apocalypsim. At the end of Œcumenius's Commentaries in 2 vols. fo. 1581.

He flourished about the seventh century.

Bale (John.) The Image of both Churches. 18mo. 1550.

Bullinger (Henry.) A Hundred Sermons on. 4to. 1573.

Marlorate (Aug.) A Catholic Exposition. 4to. 1574.

Napier (John, Baron.) A Plain Discovery. 4to. 1593.

Giffard (Geo.) Commentary. A Spiritual Work. 4to. 1596.

Cowper (Bp.) Commentary on Revelation. fo. 1623.

Dent (Arthur.) The Ruin of Rome. 4to. 1607.

Alcazar (Louis.) Vestigatio Arcani sensus. fo. 1619.

He also published a Commentary on the Old Testament, as connected with the Apocalypse, fo. 1631.

Mede (Jos.) Clavis Apocalyptica (in his Works.)

A translation by More, 4to. 1643, and by R. B. Cooper, in 1833.

Goodwin (Thos.) An Exposition upon the Revelation. 1639.

In the second volume of his works, in folio.

Cotton (John.) The Pouring out of the Seven Vials. 4to. 1642.

Exposition of Revelation xiii. 4to. 1655.

Potter (Francis.) The Interpretation of the Number 666. 4to. 1642.

Pareus (D.) Commentary by Arnold. fo. 1644.

Brightman (Thos.) Revelation of St. John. 4to. 1645.

First published in Latin, in 1609.

Cluverus (John.) Diliculum Apocalypticum. fo. 1647.

Praised by Baxter, who thought the Millennium past, and the Revelation chiefly fulfilled.

Stephens (Nath.) Calculation of the Name and Number of the Beast. 4to. 1656.

Hall (Bp.) Revelation Unrevealed. 18mo. 1650.

Guild (Wm.) On the Revelations. 12mo. 1656.

Very spiritual.

Hicks (Wm.) Revelation Revealed. fo. 1659.

Hoffmanni (M.) *Chronotaxis Apocalyptica*. 4to. 1668 and 1687.

Canne (John.) Truth with Time pointing out none of the Seven Vials yet poured out. 4to. 1656.

More (Henry.) Exposition of the Epistles to the Seven Churches. 12mo. 1669.

Durham (James.) A Commentary upon. 4to. 1680.

Very spiritual and evangelical.

More (Henry.) Exposition. 4to. 1680.

Heideggeri (J. H.) *In Apocalypseos Diatribæ*. 2 vols. 4to. 1687.

A valuable writer.

Knollys (H.) Exposition, &c. shewing the glorious state of the Latter Days. 4to. 1689.

Bossuet (J. B.) *L'Apocalypse avec une Explication*. 8vo. 1689.

A Roman Catholic Exposition.

Allen (W.) A Discourse on the Occurrences represented Rev. xi. 12mo. 1689.

Cressener (Drue.) A Demonstration of the Protestant Applications of the Apocalypse. 4to. 1690.

A work full of instruction and copious testimonies from the Romanists.

Petto (Samuel.) *Revelation Unveiled*. 8vo. 1693.

Sylviera (J.) *Comment. in Apocalypsim*. 2 vols. fo. 1700.

A learned Romanist. Full of details of sentiments of previous writers.

Waple (E.) *Book of Revelation Paraphrased*. 4to. 1716.

Some useful hints in this work. He treads in the steps of Mede, and holds the personal coming before the Millennium.

Wells (Edward.) *Commentary on*. 4to. 1717.

Vitringa (Camp.) *Anacrisis Apocalypseos*. 4to. 1719.

A very valuable Commentary.

Daubuz (Charles.) *Perpetual Commentary*. Fo. 1720. New modelled and abridged, by Peter Lancaster. 4to. 1730.

Much valuable matter in this work.

Robertson (J.) *Exposition*. Fo. 1730.

Newton (Sir Isaac.) *Observations on the Apocalypse*. 4to. 1733.

A very useful work.

Bengelius (J. A.) *The Revelation Explained* (in German.) 8vo. 1740. See also his *Gnomon* in Latin.

A summary by Robertson, 8vo. 1757. See also his *Life* by Walker.

Whiston (Wm.) *An Essay on the Revelation*. 4to. 1744.

Much useful information in this Essay, but fanciful.

Lowman (Moses.) *Paraphrase and Notes*. 4to. 1745.

- Bird* (John.) Inquiry into the Second Woe, showing the Tenth Part of the City, in France. 8vo. 1747.
- Walmsley* (Chas.) Pastorini's General History of the Christian church. 8vo. 1770 and 1812.
- A curious Roman Catholic perversion of the Apocalypse.
- Buchanan* (J.) Revelation Explained. 8vo. 1778.
- Kershaw* (James.) Essay on the Principal Parts. 2 vols. 12mo. 1780.
- Cradock* (S.) Brief and Plain Exposition. 12mo. 1782.
- Anti-millenarian, but Evangelical.
- Vivian* (Thos.) Annotations on the Revelation. 12mo. 1785.
- Revelation* Considered, as alluding to the Temple Services. 8vo. 1789.
- Cooke* (Wm.) The Revelation Explained. 8vo. 1789.
- Winchester* (El.) Three Woe Trumpets. 8vo. 1793.
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- Dick* (David.) Explanation of. 8vo. 1799.
- Whitaker* (E. W.) A Commentary on the Revelations. 8vo. 1802.
- Galloway* (Jos.) Brief Commentary on Parts referring to the Present Times. 8vo. 1802.
- Butt* (Martin.) The Revelation compared with itself and the rest of Scripture. 8vo. 1804. The Divinity of the Apocalypse Demonstrated. 12mo. 1809.
- Woodhouse* (J. C.) The Apocalypse translated, with Notes. 8vo. 1805. Annotations on the Apocalypse. 8vo. 1828. A very valuable work.
- Thurston* (Fred.) England Safe and Triumphant. 2 vols. 8vo. 1812.
- Clarke* (J. E.) Dissertation on the Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet, and on Daniel's Vision of the Ram and He-Goat. 8vo. 1814.
- Fuller* (Andrew.) Expository Discourses. 8vo. 1815.
- Culbertson* (Robert.) Lectures, with Practical Observations. 2 vols. 8vo. 1818.
- Holmes* (J. J.) Fulfilment of the Revelation. 8vo. 1819.
- Gauntlett* (Henry.) An Exposition. 8vo. 1821.
- Compiled chiefly from Scott and Faber. Practical and anti-millenarian.
- Murray* (R.) Introduction to the Study of. 8vo. 1826.
- Culbertson* (Robert.) Lectures Expository and Practical. 3 vols. 8vo. 1826.
- Brown* (J. A.) The Jew and the Master-Key of the Apocalypse. 8vo. 1827.
- Croly* (G.) Apocalypse of St. John. 8vo. 1828.

Some striking thoughts, but the general interpretation unsatisfactory.

Keyworth (Thos.) Exposition of the Revelation. 8vo. 1828.

Jones (Wm.) Lectures on the Apocalypse. 8vo. 1830.

Milner (I.) History of the Seven Churches, designed to show the Fulfilment of Prophecy. 8vo. 1831.

Irving (Ed.) Exposition of the Revelation. 4 vols. 1828.

See Mr. Cuninghame's Strictures.

Girdleston (Henry.) An Analytical Comment on the First Part of Revelation. 8vo. 1833.

A very valuable work.

Cooper (R. B.) A Commentary on the Revelation. 8vo. 1833.

✓ *Cuninghame* (Wm.) A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets. 1834. Third edition, 8vo. 1833.

One of the most valuable expositions of this book: though in some of the applications of the prophecy it will be seen the author differs occasionally.

Burgh (W.) The Apocalypse Unfulfilled. 12mo. 1833-34.

An attempt to set aside all preceding expositions of the fulfilment of this book, in the author's opinion on very unsatisfactory and insufficient grounds, yet with practical and useful Remarks.

Ashe (Isaac.) The Book of Revelation, with Notes. 12mo. 1834.

Pearson (Geo.) The Prophetical Character and Inspiration of the Apocalypse considered. 8vo. 1835.

On the plan of Woodhouse and Vitringa. A useful work.

Roe (Rich.) Analytical Arrangement, on the Principles of Lowth, Jebb, and Boys. 4to. 1834.

Hutcheson (A.) The Apocalypse its own Interpreter. 12mo. 1834.

Considerable ability, with some assumption and dogmatism; but not without valuable thoughts.

Fysh (Fred.) The Beast and his Image, being a Commentary upon Rev. xiii. 8vo. 1838.

Much historical information, justly shewing the connection of this chapter with Popery, but the force of this weakened by several unsatisfactory applications.

Lovett (H. W.) Revelation Explained. 8vo. 1838.

See the Remarks on Croly.

Adams (R. N.) Opening of the Sealed Book. 8vo. 1838.

Fanciful and unsatisfactory.

Heasell (Ann.) Studies on the Apocalypse. 12mo. 1838.

Many useful remarks.

Girdlestone (Henry.) Apocalyptical Tracts. 12mo. 1839.

Digby (W.) Courte Explication. 8vo. 1839. Toulouse.

IV.

ON THE JEWISH CIVIL DISABILITIES BILL.

Among the many important measures of national legislation brought forward in a late session of parliament (1836), in this country, there is one having a special bearing on prophecy and on the state of the Jews, which seems to have gained but little attention, and yet to be fraught with consequences of such deep moment as to call for distinct remarks. In June, 1836, a bill was brought in by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Baring, for admitting Jews to the same rights, franchises, and privileges as Roman Catholics have been admitted to, on taking the oath and subscribing the declaration required of them, omitting the words, "upon the true faith of a Christian." It has had too large a support, and is too agreeable to the spirit of the age, not to occasion just anxiety.

Several petitions in favour of this bill were offered. One from a Hebrew Congregation meeting at Edinburgh, is much in the high-minded spirit of infidelity, boasting in "the enlightened spirit of the times," and mourning "their degraded situation," as "resulting" not from their own sin and unbelief, but from "disqualifying laws;" and claiming "from their proverbial loyalty, [408] peaceable demeanour, and industry," an equality with all other classes, "at the hands of an enlightened legislature, the representatives of a great, free, and liberal nation." O how different a spirit from that to which the Jews will soon come. Lev. xxvi. 40—42; Isaiah x. 20, 21.

Another petition was from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London in Common Council assembled, and it is so public and painful an evidence of the departure of those in high places from "the true faith of a Christian," to use the words of parliament, that I cannot but transcribe the petition, as a most affecting symptom of that departure in leaders of a professedly-Protestant nation.

"That your Petitioners look back with lively feelings of pleasure upon the *liberal* course which has been adopted by the Legislature during the last few years, in successively removing those civil disabilities to which Protestant Dissenters and other British subjects had been previously subjected on account of differences of religious faith.

"That in the opinion of your Petitioners, his Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion, by loyalty to their king, obedience to the laws, and by the observance of the various duties of social life, have established an irrefragable claim to a full

participation of all the benefits, civil and political, which flow from such an enlightened system of legislation.

“That your Petitioners have seen with great satisfaction a Bill now before your honourable house, enabling his Majesty’s subjects professing the Jewish religion to enjoy all the same civil rights, and to hold the same civil offices as British subjects of the Roman Catholic faith; and as the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the removal of Catholic disabilities, were effected by the happy concurrence of statesmen otherwise politically opposed, your petitioners earnestly hope that a similar spirit of liberality will again manifest itself in obtaining for the said bill the sanction of both houses of parliament, and thus consummating the great triumph of civil and religious liberty, by extending an equal measure of justice to every class of British subjects.”

It is remarkable how different was the state of the nation in 1753, when a bill for the naturalization of the Jews, (excluding them however from civil and military offices and other privileges,) [409] was passed through parliament. Though it gave them not political power, the Lord Mayor and Council of London then also petitioned, but it was to express their apprehension that the bill would tend to the dishonour of the Christian religion. Such a ferment was also excited by it through the nation, that the bill was repealed the next session.

The great art of the enemy of our souls is to call evil things by good names; and a most solemn woe is pronounced against those doing this. “Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” It may indeed be a symptom to us of the approaching triumph of truth, that our great spiritual foe is obliged to assume the mask of light, liberality, benevolence, and an equal measure of justice, in order even to accomplish his objects of dethroning God and his truth.

What is called the *liberal* course really is open disbelief and contempt of the truths of God’s word. We make no difference between giving power and showing favour to those maintaining the grossest corruptions of Christianity, predicted in the word of God as such, like the Papists, or denying Christianity altogether like the Jews; and giving power and shewing favour to those holding with a consistent practice, truths plainly revealed, and for holding which distinctly, God has been blessing us as a nation for the last three centuries beyond every other nation. Political power is a trust and favour of God, and not a universal right; and governments, like individuals, are bound not to patronize but to discountenance those who turn aside from

God's word, Ps. ci. But the day is hastening on when *the vile person shall no more be called liberal.*

The claim to civil power is made to rest on good conduct. The Bible puts it simply on the will and righteousness of the Lord. Psalm lxxv. 6; Rom. xiii. 1, 2; Titus iii. 1; 1 Peter iii. 13.

Rejoicing in what is called an enlightened system of legislation cannot but remind us of that fearful prediction, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

The happy concurrence of "statesmen politically opposed," is too like that foretold of the enemies of our Lord to give anything [410] but pain in such a cause to a thoughtful Christian. Acts iv. 25—28.

The "consummating of the great triumph" is not, it is to be feared, the triumph of liberty, but of licentiousness; is not the triumph of religion, but of infidelity. That is "an equal measure of justice," which is regulated according to the revealed will of God, establishing and not setting aside the truths of his word. May God preserve our country from that awful state: "They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations; I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them."

One great principle of the Christian's faith is that all power in heaven and earth is given to that Divine Redeemer, who commissioned his apostles to go and baptize all nations in his name. When nations have received him as their Lord, they thereby own their allegiance to him, and acknowledge him as having all power, and in reality profess that the power which he gives to them is a trust derived from him. Faithfulness to Christ is then the very basis on which power ought to be entrusted by a Christian government to those ruling under it, as may be seen in David's statement of his own purposes. Ps. ci. On this principle our whole constitution was formed. Our king is to be a Protestant, and takes a solemn oath to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion.

We have hitherto nationally acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ, as having all power in heaven and earth, but for us now to commit the power he has entrusted to us, to those whose very character it is to disown him, is not real kindness to them, but injury under the mask of kindness! is not benevolence to man, or obedience to God's law of love, but ruin to our country, and treason to the King of kings.

The Jewish Civil Disabilities Bill appears to me so peculiarly important and fearful a national measure, that I feel called upon while there is yet time to do it, solemnly to testify against it in these strong statements.

If, yielding to the falsely liberal, and really infidel, spirit of the age, we adopted this bill, we should voluntarily give up "as a nation" in our legislature, not only any decided profession of the Protestant faith, but even that of the Christian faith. Under [411] what I fear may be called the hypocritical mask of superior liberality towards the Jew, we should as a legislature renounce our Saviour Christ, and despise our peculiar character and honour as a Christian nation. It seems to me if this measure were carried, it would be, through our unbelief, the transfer back again to the Jews, though they seek not for it, of that which we obtained through their unbelief, even the Christianity of the country with all our religious privileges; it would be the completion of our national apostacy, and the opening of the door to those last threatened judgments, which it is predicted shall come on the Gentiles.

For farther remarks on the duty of a Christian government to support the true religion, see Bishop Reynolds' four Sermons on Zech. iii. 1; Hosea ix. 12; Zech. ii. 5, and Malachi iv. 2, 3.

V.

NATIONAL SINS.

Among many other national sins that might be mentioned as bringing down the divine displeasure on our country, the following may be particularly noticed.

THE DIRECT SUPPORT OF POPERY. This is done in various forms. The annual grant to Maynooth has now for many years, and under all parties, dishonoured God, by national maintenance of an avowed idolatrous religion. Increasing grants have also been made for the support of Papal bishops and priests in our colonies: 26 are thus appointed in India, at an expense of 2000*l.* a-year, and 83 in our other colonies, at an expense of 14,763*l.* The Government have also (July 1839) carried a measure, and are proceeding with it, notwithstanding the small minority of two for it, in a full House of Commons, and the large majority against it in the House of Lords, sanctioning national support of Papal education. How painful is it to see our country thus more stamped, year by year, with the mark of the beast, and worshipping his image! Rev. xix. 20.

Mr. Poynder has given the following affecting proofs of our

NATIONAL SUPPORT OF PAGAN IDOLATRY, in a letter, dated June 21, 1839, to the editor of a morning paper:—"I have proved, in [412] open court, that the European officer of the Madras government offered a gold marriage necklace (an indication of the strictest union, and therefore a direct act of worship) to the idol Padazier, together with red silk cloth and incense; and also presented scarlet cloth to the priests, and money to the heathen attendants. I then also read the government order, authorizing this expenditure from the public treasury, for this idolatrous ceremony. I farther proved that offerings are annually made on behalf of the government, to the idols at Conjeveram, near Madras; no similar honour having ever been paid to idolatry under the rule of Mahomedan predecessors. Also that the British Government herein incurs the expense of 300 pagodas, paid from the public treasury, and I named Mr. Place, as the government officer (the collector of the Jaghire), from whose time the festival has been performed by the India Company. I further shewed that, in one year, the Rajah of Mysore requested leave to perform this worship himself, which was conceded; but in the following year the government performed the ceremony instead of the rajah. I proved that Mr. Place offered to the god jewels and a head ornament worth 1000 pagodas; that Lord Clive, on his personal visit to an idol temple, offered an ornament of 1050 pagodas; that Mr. Collector Garrow presented a gold necklace of 500 pagodas; and that till this time, the collectors present to the god, every year, a lace garment of 100 rupees' value. In Mr. Place's collectorate, he sent for all the musicians, dancing girls (or prostitutes), elephants, and horses, attached to the other temples of the Jaghire, in order to increase the pomp of the principal ceremony in question, when he gave his personal attendance, and made offerings to the priests who recited the vedas;—and I then asked the court whether these facts did not remind them of Mr. Burke's celebrated declaration, that "The servants of the East India Company contrive to get unbaptized in their outward-bound passage?" I proved further that the government order issued at Canara, so late as 1833, fully sanctions the offerings to the idols for procuring rain, and expressly allows money from the public treasury, for the maintenance of this abominable superstition, and even directs the officiating priest to offer such worship. The total money paid in that one year to the several temples in one district, was no less than 360 rupees. I proved further that the Hindoo goddess of wisdom [413] ("the world by wisdom knew not God," 1 Cor. i.) receives annual offerings at the public expense, and that, as a part of the ceremony, the account books of the Company

were equally deified, and money gifts distributed to the heathen priests. These gifts, the music, and the fruit, all form a regular item in the public expenditure."

THE SINS OF TRADE and commerce are very great. The iniquities of the opium trade with China have been lately brought forward; and the wickedness, folly, and impolicy of it may be fully seen in a pamphlet with that title, published by the Rev. A. S. Thelwall. A heathen nation sends a Christian nation the means of a daily refreshing beverage; and the Christian nation returns, to a larger amount, a poisonous drug, full of the most deleterious injury to that heathen nation, against all its laws and authorities! And that Christian nation is Protestant Britain! Oh, let us not be high-minded, but mourn for the abominations done in the midst of our country.

To these sins may be added our neglected poor, both as to religious education and church room, and our wide neglect of the Christian instruction of our vast colonies.

In the midst of all our national iniquities, there is nothing like national humiliation; though all our difficulties abroad and at home, and the progress of a spirit of insubordination and infidelity might well awaken the fears of the most careless, and lead us back to him from whom we have so deeply revolted.

VI.

ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Mr. Alison's, the fullest history yet given of events connected with the French Revolution, furnishes many historical illustrations of the pouring out of the vials. In the opening remarks, Mr. Alison finds the most natural division to be that, which in truth developes by facts, in a remarkable way, the meaning of the first four of the vials. The statement is so striking that it is added—

"The history of Europe during the French Revolution naturally divides itself into four Periods.

[414] "The **FIRST** commencing with the convocation of the States General in 1789 terminates with the execution of Louis, and the establishment of a republic in France in 1793. This period embraces the history and vast changes of the Constituent Assembly; the annals of the Legislative Assembly; the revolt and overthrow of the throne on the 10th August; the trial and death of the King. It traces the changes of public opinion, and the fervor of innovation, from their joyous commencement to that bloody catastrophe, and the successive steps by which

the nation was led from transports of general philanthropy to the sombre ascendants of sanguinary ambition.

“The **SECOND** opens with the strife of the Girondists and the Jacobins; and after recounting the fall of the former body, enters into the dreadful æra of the Reign of Terror, and follows out the subsequent struggles of the more exhausted factions till the establishment of a regular military government, by the suppression of the revolt of the National Guard of Paris in October 1795. This period embraces the commencement of the war, the immense efforts of France during the campaign in 1793, the heroic contest in La Vendee, the last efforts of Polish independence under Kosciusko, the conquest of Flanders and Holland, and the scientific manœuvres of the campaign of 1795. But its most interesting part is the internal history of the Revolution, the heart-rending sufferings of persecuted virtue, and the means by which Providence caused the guilt of the Revolutionists to work out their own deserved and memorable punishment.

“The **THIRD**, commencing with the rise of Napoleon, terminates with the seizure of the reins of power by that extraordinary man, and the first pause in the general strife, by the peace of Amiens. It is singularly rich in splendid achievement, embracing the Italian campaigns of the French hero, and the German ones of the Archduke Charles, the battles of St. Vincent, Camperdown, and the Nile; the expedition of Egypt, the wars of Suwarrow in Italy, and Massena on the Alps; the campaigns of Marengo and Hohenlinden: the Northern Coalition, with its dissolution by the victory of Copenhagen; the conquests of the English in India, and the expulsion of the French from Egypt. During this period the democratic passions of France had exhausted themselves, and the nation groaned under a weak but relentless military [415] despotism, whose external disasters and internal severities prepared all classes to range themselves round the banners of a victorious chieftain.

“The **FOURTH** opens with brighter auspices to France under the firm and able government of Napoleon, and terminates with his fall in 1815. Less illustrated than the former period by his military genius, it was rendered still more memorable by his resistless power and mighty achievements. It embraces the campaign of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland; the destruction of the French navy at Trafalgar; the rise of the desperate struggle in Spain, and the gallant though abortive efforts of Austria in 1809; the degradation and extinction of the Papal authority, the slow but steady growth of the English military power in the Peninsula, and the splendid career of Wellington;

the general suffering under the despotism of France, the memorable invasion of Russia, the convulsive efforts of Germany in 1813, the last campaign of Napoleon, the capture of Paris, and his final overthrow at Waterloo.

"The two first periods illustrate the consequences of democratic ascendancy upon the civil condition: the two last their effect upon the military struggles, and external relations of nations. In both, the operation of the same law of nature may be discerned, for the expulsion of a destructive passion from the frame of society, by the efforts which it makes for its own gratification; in both, the principal actors were overruled by an unseen power, which rendered their vices, and ambition, the means of ultimately effecting the deliverance of mankind. Generations perished during the vast transition, but the law of nature was unceasing in its operation; and the same principle which drove the government of Robespierre through the reign of terror to the 9th of Thermidor, impelled Napoleon to the snows of Russia and the rout of Waterloo.* The illustrations of this moral law compose the great lesson to be learned from the eventful scenes of this mighty drama.

"A subject so splendid in itself, so full of political and military instruction, replete with such great and heroic actions, adorned by so many virtues, and darkened by so many crimes, never yet fell to the lot of an historian. During the twenty-five years of its [416] progress, the world has gone through more than five hundred years of ordinary existence; and the annals of modern Europe will be sought in vain for a parallel to that brief period of anxious effort and chequered achievements."

The historian adopts the figures of the prophet: after stating that "within the space of twenty years, events were accumulated which would have filled the whole annals of a powerful state in any former age with instruction and interest," and comparing the events with those of Roman History, Mr. Alison observes, "The power of France was less durable than that of Rome, only because it was more oppressive; it was more stubbornly resisted, because it did not bring the blessings of civilization on its wings. Its course was hailed by no grateful nations, unlike the beneficent Sun of Roman greatness which shone only to improve, its light like the dazzling glare of the meteor "rolled, blazed, destroyed and was no more." See Rev. xvi. 8, 9.

So after speaking of the sudden and unexpected changes producing the most disastrous consequences, he adds "the ideas of men were entirely overturned, when rights established for

* "Le agitent," says Bossuet, "mais Dieu les meme."

centuries, privileges contended for by successive generations, and institutions held the most sacred, were at once abandoned. Nothing could be regarded as stable in society after such a shock; the chimeras of every enthusiast, the dream of every visionary, seemed equally deserving of attention with the sober conclusions of reason and observation, when all that former ages had done, was swept away in the very commencement of improvement. The minds of men were shaken by the yawning of the ground during the fury of an EARTHQUAKE; all that the eye had rested on as most stable, all that the mind had been accustomed to regard as most lasting disappeared before the first breath of innovation." See again Rev. xi. 13.

The natural shining of a bright sun accompanied Bonaparte's most remarkable victories. Early in the morning of the battle of Austerlitz, Mr. Alison (vol. v. p. 475.) says, "the ruddy glow of the east announced the approach of day, and the tops of the hills, illuminated by the level rays, appeared clear and sharp above the ocean of fogs that rolled in the valleys. At last the sun rose in unclouded brilliancy, that "sun of Austerlitz" which he so often apostrophized as illuminating the most splendid periods of his life." [417] It was striking that the face of nature should thus harmonize with that deeper lesson which the Apocalyptic symbol of Bonaparte's victories had conveyed. Rev. xvi. 8, 9.

Bonaparte's intentions in invading England are fully developed in this work: he told Mr. O'Meara, "I would have proclaimed a republic, the abolition of the nobility, and the house of peers, the distribution of the property of such of the latter as opposed me among my partizans; liberty, equality and the sovereignty of the people. I would have let the house of Commons remain, but would have introduced a great reform. I would have separated Ireland from England and left them to themselves after having sown the seeds of republicanism in their *morale*." See vol. 5, p. 378. It is affecting to think how much has been sought to be done by our own countrymen since the death of Bonaparte in accordance with the wishes of him who had such bitter hatred against us, and wished so much for our destruction.

VII.

CONSUMING OF POPERY, AND ITS BOASTFULNESS.

The pillage of the Papal States by the French in 1797, was such as to drain them of its specie, and to take away all the jewels and precious stones they could find. The French Am-

bassador wrote to Napoleon stating "discontent is at its highest in the papal states. The payment of 30,000,000, stipulated by the treaty of Tolentino, at the close of so many previous losses, has totally exhausted this old CARCASS. We are making it consume by a slow FIRE." The very figures of Rev. xvii. 16. See Alison, vol. iii. p. 548.

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Gregory the XVI. bearing date August 16, 1832, (to which public attention has been more directed from the way in which what was called the forgery of a feigned letter was received) is a remarkable exhibition of acknowledged danger, weakness, and decay; connected also, alas, with an awful developement of that state of mind, *they repented not to give him glory*. Rev. xvi. 9. Were it not needful to warn the [418] church of the signs of the times, and of the evil spirit proceeding from the mouth of the false prophet, (Rev. xvi. 13, 14.) true charity would be glad to be spared the laying open of such evil. This letter assumes the lofty title of "our most holy Lord by divine providence, Pope Gregory." It begins with mourning over a tempest of evils and disasters, and the danger of being overwhelmed by them, and glories in the virgin, as the Patroness and Preserver of the Pope. He says, "This our Roman chair of the blessed Peter in which Christ has placed the main strength of the church is most furiously assailed." "The Catholic faith is attacked no longer now by a secret undermining, but a horrible and nefarious warfare is openly and avowedly waged against her." If such be the acknowledged danger, a renouncing of all wickedness is the right course to be pursued, but instead of this we see a firm adherence to all that which has occasioned God's displeasure on Papal countries. The claims of full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the *universal* church, of the dispensation of the Canons, and of decisions on the fathers; the denunciations against liberty of conscience and liberty of the press; the description of "the wicked ravings and schemes of the Waldenses, Beguards, Wicliffites and other sons of Belial" as "the off-scourings and disgrace of the human race:" and the close, with a prayer to the Virgin Mary as one "who alone has destroyed all heresies, and is the greatest confidence, even the whole foundation of our hope," and prayer also to Peter and Paul; all these things shew the same impenitent spirit and hard retention of those evil things which have already brought down the past vials of judgments on Papal lands, and are preparing rapidly the way for its final destruction. *Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* The delay of judgment is in great mercy and for salvation to all that turn to God. God is *long suffering to us-ward,*

not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But though Popery be consuming as to its resources, there is a temporary revival in its efforts in all parts, particularly in Protestant countries, and a boastfulness of its progress, and a going forth of its friends, quite characteristic of the preparation for the last conflict. A painful specimen of its boasting and exaggerated hopes may be seen in the following extracts from letters of Mr. [419] Phillips, translated from a publication, with authority, at Rome, in 1839. The names of these converts are printed in the Italian publication. I have omitted them, as not wishing to stamp their rejoicing in iniquity with such an appearance of truth in facts; there seems to be, at any rate, very considerable exaggeration.

“LXXV. Already the fruits of these universal prayers (for England) begin to be felt in the extraordinary spirit of research respecting our divine faith, which developes itself from day to day, in a manner felt by both parties to be astonishing, and in two illustrious conversions, which have taken place lately, that of Baron G. S——, a Scotch nobleman, who possesses an income of 40,000*l.* per annum, and of Mr. D——, a man of noble birth, with an income of at least 30,000*l.* These conversions have occasioned wonderful feelings. The eldest son of the Baronet, Sir C. W——, (an illustrious convert at the age of 70, and now at Rome) has written to his father (whilst he remained at Paris,) to announce to him that he has become a Catholic. An apostate priest (whose name I am not yet permitted to give) has returned to the unity of the church. He was a doctor of theology in the English church, and enjoyed an immense reputation amongst the Protestants, whilst he was with them. He has given proof of the sincerity of his conversion by separating from his wife, a lady of noble family.

“I went to see Lord D—— (eldest son of the most noble Duke of ——, whose inclination towards the Catholic religion is well known), during the visit that I made to London. He received me really with pleasure. Religion is to him a subject of lively interest, and I am not without hope of him. The Lord has given him the best of hearts: let us pray for his conversion.

LXXVI. In the neighbourhood of Whitby, in the county of York, there was a numerous congregation of Protestants dissenting from the English church. These proprietors of their own chapel were disgusted with their preacher, and came to the resolution of ceding themselves and their chapel to the Catholic priest. Invited for this purpose, the Rev. Mr. Nicolas Rigley, missionary to Ugthorpe, went there, and immediately

commenced the instruction of all this congregation: it appears that they continue favourable to their first impulse.

“LXXVII. [420] The attention of all good Catholics, and especially of the holy congregation of the Propaganda of the Faith, cannot be sufficiently excited to the state of the English church, in consequence of the new doctrines propagated with such force and so much success by Messrs. N., P., and K. With arguments drawn from the works of the Holy Fathers, of which they have already undertaken a new edition in English, they labour for the restoration of the ancient Catholic liturgy, of the breviary (which many of them recite each day regularly) of fasts, of the monastic life, and of many other religious practices. They also teach the insufficiency of the Bible as a rule of faith, the necessity of traditions, and of ecclesiastic authority, the real presence, prayer for the dead, the use of images, the power of absolution in the priesthood, the sacrifice of the Eucharist, devotion to the most holy Madonna, and many other Catholic doctrines, so that but very little separates them from the true faith, and this little decreases every day. Believers multiply dispositions so precious, by multiplying your prayers.

“LXXVIII. The English theologians of Oxford draw daily nearer to us. See now E—— (a most zealous Protestant minister) has desired a return to union with us, and proposed it in a manner so beautiful, that I was obliged to turn my head to hide the tears of pleasure that filled my eyes. Let us thank God and pray.”

The reader is also referred to two very valuable articles in the Quarterly Review: No. 125, on the Archbishop of Cologne; and No. 127, on the Exiles of Zillerthal.

VIII.

DRYING UP OF THE EUPHRATES.

As Mr. Alison's History of the French Revolution furnishes illustrations of the first four vials, so the Rev. R. Walsh's Letters, and his Residence in Constantinople, just published (1836), in two volumes octavo, furnish illustrations of the sixth vial. They contain authentic accounts of the Greek and Turkish revolutions, the [421] destruction of the Janissaries, and the fires devastating Constantinople.

Some extracts will shew the desolation of these countries.

He thus describes it, on the shores of the Hellespont:—
“Here it was that the first picture of Turkish desolation presented itself to me. While those smiling prospects which a

good Providence seems to have formed for the delight of man, invite him to fix his dwelling among them, all is desert and desolate as the prairies of Missouri. In a journey of nearly fifteen miles along the coast, and for half the length of the Hellespont, I did not meet a single human habitation, and this is the finest climate, the most fertile soil, and once the most populous country in the world."—Vol. i. 212.

Again, vol. ii. 228. "As I approached Constantinople, there was no cheering appearance of a dense population; no increase of houses, or villages to intimate the vicinity of a large city. For the last ten miles we did not pass a house, nor meet a man; and we suddenly found ourselves under the walls before I was aware that I was approaching the town. We passed through the Silyvria gate, and the desolation within was worse, because less expected than that without. As our horses' hoofs clattered over the rugged pavement, the noise was startling, so desolate and silent were the streets."

Again, vol. ii. 136. The island of Plate "strongly reminded me of some of those solitary islands in Arctic and other remote regions, seldom visited by man, of which birds alone keep an undisturbed possession: but this was within a few miles of an immense city, the noise of whose population could be heard, if it was not drowned in the scream of those birds. We left this island, from which we were in some measure driven by its wild inhabitants (the sea-fowl), feeling it another evidence of the exceeding solitude and depopulation of every place around this great Turkish capital."

Once more, vol. ii. 188, he thus speaks of Nicæa: "So late as the year 1677, it was a flourishing and populous town. It then contained a population of 10,000 Christian Greeks, and many precious remains of antiquity to attest its former splendour. But the desolating hand of the Turks has since effaced every trace of this; and it is a melancholy contemplation now to behold it, the shadowy [422] phantom of a magnificent city, on a beautiful and fertile spot, where bountiful nature has provided every thing necessary for human life; an extensive plain exuberant with fertility, sloping lawns verdant with pasture, wooded hills covered with the finest timber, and a climate the most bland and delicious that ever refreshed a mortal frame. Yet here human life is actually extinguished, human habitations totally obliterated, and the solitude rendered more striking by the irrefragable testimonies of its former splendour, and the visible evidences of what it recently was, and what it still might be. . . . The next morning at daylight we left this most interesting, but melancholy spot, where there is a lovely and fertile

plain fifteen miles long, and no one to cultivate it, a lake like an inland sea, full of fish, and no one to eat them, and the magnificent walls of a city more than eight miles in circumference, and no one to inhabit it."

Not only the acts of the Government, but documents given by Mr. Walsh in his Appendix, shew that Turkey still retains its cruelty and oppression, its poisonous doctrines and its hostility to the word of God. This may be seen in the Fetva and warning issued at Constantinople, in February, 1823, and the Firman, published in June, 1824, prohibiting the buying or selling of the Turkish Bible.

The following extract of a statement, given in the German Courier, August 10, 1836, from Constantinople, will show that the awful dispensations connected with the sixth vial continue towards the Turkish empire. "The town of the Dardanelles, which has just been almost totally burnt, contained a population of 20,000 souls; it is unknown whether the fire originated in evil design or not. From the moment of its first breaking out the greatest efforts were made to save the powder magazines which contained an immense quantity of combustible materials. The last batteries have fallen a prey to the flames." Thus every thing seems to conspire to render Turkey defenceless. —*Record*, Sept. 8, 1836.

In the midst of these scenes of desolation and misery, what a cheering and steady light does the blessed and sure word of prophecy present to our minds. Isaiah lviii. 12; lxi. 4.

Every thing respecting the Turkish empire that has taken place since the earlier editions of this work exhibits the same drying up of the Euphrates. The intelligent Paris correspondent of the *Record* [423] gives the following statement, date July 2, 1839, "In a recent debate in the Chamber of Deputies, the speech of M. La Martine is stated to be to this effect: The Ottoman empire, he declares, exists no more, that it is a mere phantom, that to attempt to re-establish it, or to prop it up into a temporary feeble strength would be labour lost; that the idea of substituting for it an Arabian power, an Egyptian dynasty, having Mahomet Ali for its founder, is an equally vain thought; that the pasha and Ibrahim are but splendid transitory meteors of the eastern sky, and their performances but mirages of the desert; that the whole territory, whether belonging to the Porte or to the Viceroy of Egypt, should be regarded as a waste in the political world, awaiting the incursions of European civilization; that instead, therefore, of deprecating war in the east, that event should be hailed as a signal to civilized Europe, meaning France, to regenerate the race who inhabit

that region, that the Anglo-Russian system of the *status quo* should be totally abjured, and that a new empire should be aimed at, whether by the conquest of one western power or by the division of Turkey and Egypt, between several powers he does not say. "I am not," he says, "a Revolutionist, I am not a political adventurer, but I declare without hesitation that France, Europe, Asia, civilization, humanity, will all gain by a war in the east, which will precipitate us into an unknown career; *nous appellerons tous dans la carrière de l'inconnu.*"

The word of God has distinctly enough pointed out that career, in the day of tribulation and the final triumph, not of any human kingdom, but of the kingdom of Christ, and his only.

The *Journal des Debats* has noticed that the Sultan had seen some of the largest and fairest provinces of his immense empire wrested from him by conquest, or partly alienated by treaty and usurpation of his sovereign rights, instancing Moldavia, Wallachia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria.

While these sheets have been passing through the press, the position of Turkey and Egypt has become increasingly interesting to every mind alive to the times in which we are living. The vigorous, energetic, and determined Sultan Mahmoud Khan II. died about July 1, 1839, and has been succeeded by, it is said, a feeble-minded youth of 16. The war has been renewed in Syria, and the Turks defeated by the Egyptian army under Ibrahim, [424] between Bir and Aintab, on the right bank of the Euphrates. The correspondent of the Standard observes: "The days of the Turkish empire are numbered. Worldly wisdom boasted much of Mahmoud. Mahomedanism, like Popery, must be overthrown. Prophecy must be accomplished. All diplomatic attempts to prop up the Turkish empire must fail, against the positive declarations of the word of God."

IX.

RESTORATION OF THE JEWS TO THEIR OWN LAND.

It will be observed that the author considers this event likely to commence within a few years. See pages 214—217. We may then expect some symptoms even now of the preparing of the way. And not to speak of movements among the Jews themselves, and the assurance of the considerable increase of the number of the Jews in the Holy Land in the last twenty years, political events have tended very materially to direct the attention of all nations to the east, and to furnish,

it may be, vast facilities for this event. The public attention in this country was powerfully called to this by an able article in the Quarterly Review, on the present state of the Jews; and recent political events, (August, 1839,) speeches in the French Chambers, the death of the Sultan, the victory of Ibrahim Pacha, the defection of the Turkish admiral, rapidly followed each other, and have justly excited the attention of all Europe. It is a delightful fact that our government have appointed a British Vice-Consul, W. T. Young, Esq., at Jerusalem, not only for commercial purposes but also for the protection of the Jews returning from our country to Judea. He entered Jerusalem on the 10th of April, 1839, and in a letter received from him by the author, he says, "The Chief Rabbi came out to meet me about half a mile from the city gate. It certainly was a most interesting and affecting thought that our beloved country had been permitted to be the first publicly to shew her consideration for the law of Israel. Much movement is going on among the Jews here. It has pleased our heavenly Father to bless in a remarkable manner the labours of his servants; two Sundays ago we had the [425] first baptism of the Infant Protestant church at Jerusalem. There are other three waiting the opportunity publicly to avow their belief that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, men of influence and consequence in the Synagogue, besides other earnest enquirers." He justly asks, "Why does the church of England lock up her acknowledged superiority in a little island like Great Britain? What ground our beloved country might and ought to occupy! The influence she ought to have, and might have through that appointed means, her simple and dignified and spiritual form of worship, connected with the good she might do in establishing sound Scriptural truths, and thereby bursting asunder the chains of slavery both in body and soul that entwine around millions, is truly exciting!

"The Jews are here in the most interesting state, like some timid animal that has found its liberty, looking round to see which road to take. We must now soon be called upon to rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad; a nation is about to be born in a day. Every thing here is evidently in a political way preparing for the great conflict, and in the meanwhile Israel is making ready and gaining favour in the sight of the nations, that they may go forth as from Egypt with the spoil of the Gentiles."

Another recent event is thus recorded in the Standard, of August 6, 1839, in a letter, dated Alexandria, July 17: "Sir Moses Montefiore arrived here on the 12th inst. from Syria.

He has made proposals to Mehemet Ali to establish a bank here, with a capital of one million sterling, provided he will do away with the many legal disqualifications of the Jews. Sir M. Montefiore has already rented a large tract of land in Palestine, on a lease of 50 years, and holds out every inducement to his people to become agriculturists in the land of their forefathers; as one principal object of his banking institution will be rendering the necessary assistance for the prosecution of agricultural pursuits, the real riches of these countries. I fear his scheme is premature. A great and long-propheesied event may be brought about in its appointed time. A million of capital would nowhere have greater weight than in these countries. Sir M. Montefiore had his first audience from Mehemet Ali in full court dress, as sheriff of London."

The wonderful progress of steam navigation and railway travelling brings distant nations near to each other. We reach America [426] in twelve days, Syria and Egypt in a fortnight, or three weeks, India in two months. Every thing betokens the preparation for those great changes which God's word so clearly predicts.

X.

PLAN OF A COURSE OF LECTURES ON PROPHETICAL SUBJECTS.

The following heads were prepared to meet the desire of a friend for a Course of Lectures on Prophecy, to be given by those who had studied the subject and agreed in the four points of union with which the list begins. They are here added, as calculated to direct the attention of the reader to those parts of this subject which have yet to be more fully considered, and in the possible hope they may be useful in promoting the object for which they were originally prepared.

POINTS OF UNION.

1. A Future Millennium.
2. Pre-Millennial Advent.
3. Political Restoration of Israel.
4. General Protestant Application of the Apocalypse.

SUBJECTS.

I.—ON THE JEWS.

- 1 Their present dispersion
- 2 Their conversion
- 3 Restoration of Judah
- 4 The restoration of Israel
- 5 The blessings following
- 6 The duty of prayer for Israel.

II.—ON THE SECOND ADVENT.

- 1 The certainty of the 2nd advent
- 2 The first resurrection
- 3 The judgment of the living
- 4 The judgment of the dead
- 5 The new heavens and earth
- 6 Prayer for the coming and kingdom of Christ.

III.—SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

- 1 On political signs of the advent

- 2 On spiritual signs of the advent
- 3 The great tribulation
- 4 The fall of antichrist
- 5 The redemption of Israel
- 6 On Christian watchfulness.

IV.—PROPHETIC OUTLINES OF GOD'S DISPENSATIONS.

- 1 On the four empires
- 2 On the papacy or little horn
- 3 On the scope of the Apocalypse
- 4 On the triumphs of the gospel, Rev. vi. 2.
- 5 On the two woes, or dark ages
- 6 The church in the wilderness
- 7 The resurrection of the witnesses
- 8 The vials of wrath
- 9 The song of the triumphant church.

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ADDENDUM.

Page 146, line 17 from the top, after 'years,' insert,—

The various reading of *ως την ημεραν*, given by valuable manuscripts, used in the text of Arethas, and adopted by Matthæus, gives the article both with the hour and the day. We are thus referred to the former mention of that hour and that day, Rev. iii. 10, vi. 17, vii. 1. The dates of the Revelation, when not immediately before mentioned, are given without the article.